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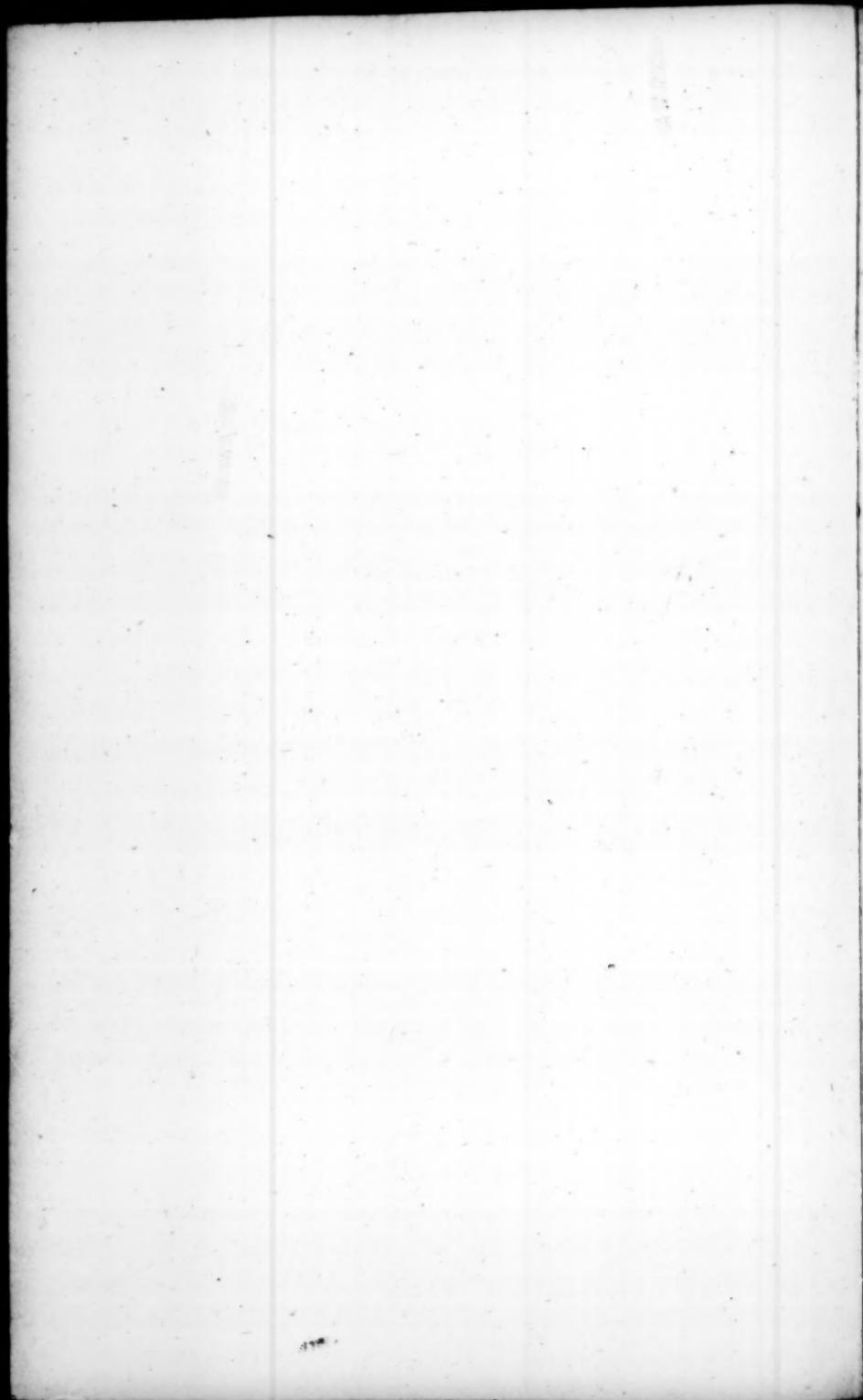
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DIRECTIONS
AND
PERSWASIONS
TO A
Sound Conversion.

FOR
Prevention of that Deceit and Damnation of Souls, and of those Scandals, Heresies, and desperate Apostasies, that are the Consequents of a Counterfeit, or Superficial Change.

By *Richard Baxter.*

The Third Edition.

LO N D O N,
Printed by *R. W.* for *Nevill Simmons*, at the Sign
of the *Princes Arms* in *St. Paul's Church-*
yard. 1673.





The PREFACE.

Tis weight so unconceivable that dependeth on the soundness of our Conversion and Sanctification, that our care and diligence cannot be too great to make it sure. As the professed Atheist, Heathens, and Infidels without; so the self-deceiving Hypocrites within the Church, do wilfully cast away themselves for ever, by neglecting such a busines of everlasting Consequence; when they have time, and warnings, and assistance to dispatch it. Multitudes live like Bruts or Atheists, forgetting that they are born in sin and misery, and settled in it by wilful Custom, and must be Converted or Condemned. These know not (many of them) what need they have of a Conversion, nor what Conversion or Sanctification is. And some that have been Preachers of the Gospel, have been so lamentably ignorant in so great a matter, that they have perswaded the poor deluded people, that it is only the gross and hainous sinners that need Conversion; branding them with the name of Puritans, that will not take a dead Profession

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joynd with Civility, for true Sanctification ; and promise Salvation to those, that Christ hath with many asseverations professed, shall not enter into the Kingdom of God. Others that confess that a through Sanctification is a necessary thing, do delude their souls with something that is like it. Hence is the misery and dishonour of the Church. Holiness it self is disgraced by the sins of them that are unholy, because they pretend to that which they have not. Hence it is, that we have thousands, that call themselves Christians that live a worldly, fleshly life, and some of them hating the way of Godliness, and yet think they are Converted, because they are sorry when they have sinned, and wish when it is past that they had not done it, and cry God mercy for it, and confess that they are sinners ; and this they take for true Repentance : When sin was never mortified in their souls, nor their hearts ever brought to hate it, and forsake it : But when they have had the profit and pleasure of sin, they are sorry for the danger, but never regenerate and made New Creatures by the Spirit of Christ. Hence also it is, that we have such abundance of mere Opinionists, that take themselves for Religious people. Because they have changed their Opinions, and their Parties, and can prate contentiously against those that are not of their mind, and joyn themselves with those that seem to be the strictest, they take themselves to be truly Sanctified : And this makes

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makes such gadding from one opinion to another, and such censuring, reviling, and divisions upon that account, because their Religion is most in their Opinions, and hath not mortified their carnal, selfish inclinations and Passions, nor brought them to a holy, heavenly mind. Hence also it is that we have so many sensual, scandalous Professors, that seem to be Religious, but bridle not their tongues, their appetites, or their lusts, but are Railers, or Back-biters, or Tipplers, or Gluttons, or filthy and lascivious, or some way scandalous to their holy Profession, because they are strangers to a through-Conversion, but take up with the counterfeit of a superficial change. Hence also we have so many wordlings, that think themselves Religious men; that make Christ but a servant to their worldly interest, and seek Heaven but for a reserve, when Earth forsakes them, and have something in this world that is so dear to them, that they cannot forsake it for the hopes of Glory; but give up themselves to Christ, with secret exceptions and reserves, for their prosperity in the world: And all, because they never knew a sound Conversion, which should have rooted out of their Hearts this worldly interest, and delivered them up entirely, and absolutely to Christ. Hence also it is that we have so few Professors that can lay by their Pride, and bear disesteem or injury, and love their enemies, and bless them that curse them, yea, or love their

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godly Friends that cross them, or dishonour them. And so few that can deny themselves in their honour, or any considerable thing, for the sake of Christ, and in obedience, and conformity to his will. And all because they never had that saving change, that takes down *Self*, and sets up Christ as Sovereign in the soul. And hence also it is that we have in this Age so many dreadful instances of Apostasie: So many reproaching the Scripture, that once they thought had Converted them, and the way of Holiness, that once they did profess; and denying the Lord himself that bought them; and all because they formerly took up with a superficial counterfeit Conversion. O how commonly, and how lamentably doth this misery appear among Professors in their unsavoury discourse, their strife and envy, on Religious pretences, their dead formality, their passionate divisions, or their selfish, proud, and earthly minds! A through Conversion would have cured all this, at least as to the dominion of it.

Having therefore in my Call to the unconverted endeavoured to awaken careless souls, and persuade the obstinate to Turn and Live, I have here spoken to them that seem to be about the work, and given them some *Directions* and *Perswasions*, to prevent their perishing in the birth, and so to prevent that Hypocrisie which else they are like to be formed into, and the deceit of their hearts

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hearts, the Error of their Lives, and the Misery at their death, which is like to follow. That they live not as those that flatter God with their mouth, and lie unto him with their tongues, because their heart is not right with him, neither are they stedfast in his Covenant, Psal. 78. 36, 37. Left denying deep entertainment, and rooting to the seed of Life, or choaking it by the radicated predominant Love and cares of the world, they wither when the heat of persecution shall break forth Matth. 13. 20, 21, 22. And left building on the sands, they fall when the winds and storms arise, and their fall be great, Matth. 7. 26, 27. And so they go out from us, that they may be made manifest that they were not of us: For if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us, 1 Joh. 2. 19. Look therefore to this great important busines, and give all diligence to make your calling and election sure, 2 Pet. 1. 10. And trust not your hearts too easily, or too confidently. But turn to the Lord with all your hearts (Joel 2. 12.) Cleave to him Resolvedly, or with purpose of heart. (Acts 11. 23.) And see that you sell all, and buy the Pearl (Matth. 13. 46.) And stick not at the price, but absolutely resign your selves to Christ, and turn to him, as Zacheus and other primitive Converts did, surrendring all that you have unto his will, (Luke 19. 8, 9.) Leave not any root of bitterness bebind; Make no exceptions, or reserves: but

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deny your selves; Forsake all, and follow him that hath led you this self-denying way; and trust to his Blood, and Merits, and Promise, for a Treasure in Heaven, and then you are his Disciples, and true Christians indeed, Luke 14. 33. Luke 18. 24, 25. Reader, if thou heartily make this Covenant and keep it, thou shalt find that Christ will not deceive thee, when the world deceiveth them that chose it, in their greatest extremity. But if it thou draw back, and think these terms too hard, remember that Everlasting Life was offered thee, and remember why and for what thou didst reject it. And if in this life time thou wilt have thy good things, expect to be tormented, when the believing, self-denying Souls are comforted, Luke 16. 25.

May 29. 1658.

R. B.

THE



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Directions to sinners that are pur- posed to Turn, and are under the Work of Conversion: that it mis- carry not.

 He first and greatest matter in the seeking after the salvation of our souls, is to be sure that we lay the *foundation* well, and that the work of *Conversion* be thoroughly wrought. To this end I have already used many *perswasions* with the unconverted to return, as thinking all further *Directions* vain, till we have *perswaded* men to a *consent* and *willingness* to practise them. And in the end of that Discourse I added a few *Directions* for the use of such as are willing to be converted. But because I know that this is a matter of exceeding consequence, I dare not thus leave it, before I have added some *further Directions*, to prevent the *miscarrying* of this work where it is *begun*. And lest I should lose my labour, through the unpreparedness of the Reader; I shall first give you some preparing Considerations, which may awaken you to the practice of the *Directions* which I shall give you.

Consider

Consider first, That *half-Convertions* are the undoing of many thousand souls. If you are but like *Agrippa*, Act. 26. 28. *almost persuaded to be Christians*, you will be but *almost saved*. Many a thousand that are now past help, have had the Word come near them, and cast them into a fear, and make some stir and trouble in their souls, awakening their consciences, and forcing them to some good *purposes* and *promises*: yea, and bringing them to the performance of a *half-reformation*; But this is not it that will serve your turn. Many have been so much changed, as not to be *far from the Kingdom of God*, that yet came short of it, *Mark 12. 34*. There is no promise in Scripture that you shall be pardoned if you *almost repent* and *believe*; or be *saved*, if you be *almost sanctified* and *obedient*: But on the contrary the Lord hath plainly resolved, that you must *turn or die*, though you *almost turn*: and *repent*, or *perish*, though you *almost repent*: and that you shall not enter into the *Kingdom of Heaven*, without *conversion* and a *new birth*, though you come never so near it. God hath resolved upon the terms of your salvation; and it is in vain to hope for salvation upon any other terms. God will not change nor come down to your terms; It is you that must change and come quite over to his terms, or you are lost for ever. If you come never so near them, you are but lost men if you come not to them. The Lord well knew what he did, when he made his Covenant and Law, and he imposed nothing on the sons of men but what his infinite wisdom told him it was fit for him to impose: and he will not now compound with you sinners, and take less than he requireth; that is, less than the preheminency in their hearts; nor will he ever come down to any lower terms with you, than those which he propoundeth to you in his *Gospel*. And therefore poor sinners,

ners, as you love your souls, do not stand dodging and halving with God ; but give up your selves entirely to him : and do not stop at the beginnings of a conversion, but go through with it, till you are become new creatures indeed, or you are undone when you have done all. A half unsound Convert will as certainly perish as a Drunkard or a Whoremonger ; though his torment may not be so great.

2. Consider also, That *if you do not go through with the work when you are upon it, you may perhaps make it more difficult than it was before ever you medled with it*, and make it a very doubtful case whether ever it will be done. As it is with a wound or other sore ; if you tamper with it with salves that are not agreeable to it, or are disorderly applied : or if you skin it over before it be searched to the bottom, it must be opened again, and will cost you double pain before it be cured. Or as I have seen it with some that have had a bone broken, or out of joyst, and it hath been set amiss at first : O what torments were the poor creatures fain to undergo, in having it broken or stretcht and set again ! which might have been spared, if it had been throughly done at first. So, if you will be shrinking, and drawing back, and favouring your flesh, and will not go to the quick, you will make your Conversion much more difficult : you must be brought to it again, and fetch your groans yet deeper than before : and weep over all your former tears : your doubts will be multiplied ; your fears and sorrows will be encreased : and all will go sorer with you than at first. O what a case will you be in, when your sores must be lanced a *second* time, and your bones as it were broken again ! Then you will wish you had gone through with it at the first.

Yea, perhaps you may put God to it to fetch you in by some sharp affliction, and send out so boistrous and churlish

churlish a Messenger to call you home, as may make you wish you had hearkened to a more gentle call : When the Sheep will straggle, the Dog must be sent to affright them home. Many a foolish sinner makes light of the gentle invitations of grace, and they stand hovering between their sins and Christ ; and sometimes they have a mind to turn, and the next temptation they are off again, and then they come on again coldly and with half a heart : and thus they stand trifling with the God of Heaven, till he is fain to take another course with them, and resolves to use some sharper means : And when he layeth them under his rod, and they can neither fly from him, nor resist him, but see that their lives and souls are at his mercy, then they begin to look about them, and see their folly, and change their minds. You can tarry, and delay, and dally with the dreadful God, in the time of your prosperity, and we may ask you over and over whether you will turn, before we can have a hearty answer : But what will you do when God shall begin to frown, and when he takes you in hand by his unresistible power, and lets loose upon you the terrors of his wrath ? Will you then make as light of his mercy as you do now ? Have you not read *Dan. 5.6.* how small an apparition of his anger did make a carousing King look pale, and his joynts to tremble, in the midst of his jovialty ? *A Manasseh* will bethink himself and come in when he is laid in irons, though he could set light by God before, *2 Chron. 33. 13.* If *Jonah* will run away from God, he can send a boisterous Messenger to arrest him, and cast him as it were into the belly of Hell, and make him cry for mercy to him that he disobeyed. So, if you will stand trifling with God, and will not by fair means be perswaded to yield & come away, you may shortly look to hear from him in another manner : for he hath a voice that will make the proudest face look pale, and the stubbornest heart that is to tremble. If an idle stubborn Child will not learn nor be ruled,

ruled; the Master or Parent will teach him with the rod, and give him a lash, and ask him, *Will you yet learn?* and another lash, and ask him, *What say you now; will you yet obey?* So will God do by you, if he love you, and mean to save you: when he hath taken away your wealth, your friends, your children, will you then hearken to him, or will you not? When you lie groaning on your couch, and all your parts are overwhelmed with pains, and death begins to lay hands upon you, and bids you *now come and answer for your rebellions and delays before the living God*, What will you do then? Will you turn or not? O the lamentable folly of sinners, that put themselves to so much sorrow, and great calamity for themselves! When sickness comes, and death draws near, you beg, and cry, and groan, and promise: When you feel the rod, what Christians will you then be? And why not without so much ado? You then think God deals somewhat hardly with you: And why will you not turn then by gentler means? You might spare your selves much of this misery if you would: and you will not. Is it a seemly thing for a man to be *driven to Heaven by* scourges? Is God so bad a Master, and Heaven so bad a place, that you will not turn to them, and mind them, and seek them, till there be no remedy, and you are as it were driven to it against your wills? Is the world such an Inheritance, and sin so good a thing, and the flesh or devil so good a Master, that you will not leave them till you are whipt away? What a shameful unreasonable course is this?

dinner

Well, Sirs, the case is plain before you. Turn you must at one time or other, or be the firebrands of Hell. And seeing it is a thing that must be done, were it not best for you to take the easiest and the surest way to do it? Why, this is the easiest and the surest way; even to strike while the iron is hot, before it cool again; and to go through

with it when God doth move you and perswade you ; if you love your flesh it self, do not put him to take up the rod, and fetch you home by stripes and terrors.

But that is not the worst : for it will sorely hazard the work it self, and consequently your salvation, if you do not go through with it at the first attempt. I know there is many an one that hath been converted and saved, after many purposes, and promises, and half-conversions. But yet I must tell you, that this is a very dangerous course. For you do not know when you grieve the Spirit of grace, and set so light by mercy when it is offered you, whether that Spirit may not utterly forsake you, and leave you to your own ungodly wills, and let you take your lusts and pleasures, and say, *[Let this wretch be filthy still : let him keep his drunkenness, his companions, his worldliness, and the curse of God with them, till he have tried what it is that they will do for him : Let him follow his own conceits, and the pride and obstinacy of his own heart, till he find whither they will bring him : Let him serve the flesh and the world, till he understand whether God or they be the better master. Seeing he will not be wise on earth, let him learn in hell, and let torments teach him, seeing mercy might not teach him.]* O poor soul ! what a case art thou in, if this should once be the resolution of God ?

Moreover you may easily know that the longer you stay, the more leisure you give the Devil to assault you, and to try one way when he cannot prevail by another, and to strengthen his temptations : Like a foolish Soldier, that will stand still to be shot at, rather than assault the enemy.

And the longer you delay, the more your sin gets strength and rooting. If you cannot bend a twig, how will you be able to bend it when it is a Tree ? If you cannot pluck up a tender plant, are you likely to pluck up a sturdy

sturdy Oak ? Custome gives strength and root to vices. *A Blackamoor may as well change his skin, or a Leopard his spots, as those that are accustomed to do evil, can learn to do well, Jer. 13. 23.*

If you stick at Conversion as a difficult matter to day, it will be more difficult to morrow, or the next month, and the next year, than it is now.

Yea the very resistance of the Spirit doth harden the heart, and the delays and triflings of the soul do bring it to an insensibility and boldnes in sin, and drive away the fear of God from the heart. Now it may be you are somewhat awakened, and begin to see that you must turn or die : but if you trifle and delay, this light may be gone, and leave you in greater darknes than before : and the voice that now awakeneth you, may be silent, and leave you to fall asleep again.

Moreover, you know that you are uncertain of the continuance of the Gospel. You know not whether you shall have such lively serious Preachers as you have now : nor you know not whether you shall have such godly neighbours and company to encourage you, and help you in the work. God will remove them one after another to himself, and then you will have fewer Prayers for you, and fewer warnings, and good examples, and perhaps be left wholly to the company of deceived ungodly fools, that will do nothing but hinder, and discourage you from Conversion. And you are not sure that Religion will continue in that reputation as now it is in. The *Times* may turn, before you turn : and godliness may become a scorn again, and it may be a matter of suffering, and may cost you your lives to live as the servants of Christ must do. And therefore if you stop at it now as a difficult thing, when you have all the helps and encouragements that you can expect, and the way to Heaven is made so fair ; and when Magistrates, and Ministers, and Neighbours are ready to encourage

and help you ; what will you do in times of persecutions and discouragement ? If you cannot turn when you have all these helps and means, what will you do when they are taken from you ? If you cannot row with the stream, how will you row against it ? If you dare not set to Sea, when you have wind and tide, and sunshine ; what will you do in storms and tempests, when all is against you ! O what would some of your forefathers have given to have seen the dayes that you see ! How glad would many a thousand in other Countries of the world be, to have but the helps to Heaven that you have ? Never look to have the way fairer and easier while you live. If you think Heaven is offered you at too dear a rate now, you may even let it go, and try whether Hell be better ; for the next offer is like to be upon harder terms rather than easier. If you cannot now find in your hearts to turn and live an holy life, what would you have done in the daies of the Apostles, or antient Christians ? and, what would you have done in *Spain* or *Italy*, where it would cost you your lives ? He that will not be Converted now, but thinks the terms of grace too hard, is so impious a despiser of Christ and Heaven, that it is no wonder if God resolve that he shall never taste of the salvation that was offered him, *Luk. 14. 24.*

Moreover you know upon what uncertainties you hold your lives, you have no assurance of them for an hour : but you are sure that they are passing away while you delay. And will you trifle then in a work that must be done ? What a case are you in, if death find you unconverted ? The heart of man is not able now to conceive the misery of your case. How dare you venture to live another day in an unconverted state, lest death should find you so ? Are you not afraid when you lie down at night, and afraid when you go out of your doors in the morning, lest death surprize you before you are converted ?

If

If you be not, it's long of your deadness and presumption.

And I would fain hear what it is that should thus stop you. What are you afraid of? Is God an enemy, that you are loth to come to him? Is the Devil a Friend that you are so loth to leave him? Is sin a paradise? Is Holiness a Misery? Is it a pleasanter life to love your money, or your lands, or your meat and drink, and lusts, than to love the most blessed God, the Creator of the World, the life of our Souls, and our Eternal Felicity? Is it better to pamper a Carcass that must shortly stink as the dung, than to provide for a living immortal soul? Whether do you think that Earth or Heaven will be the more glorious and durable felicity :

What is it Sirs that you stick at, that you make so many delayes before you'll turn? Is there any difficulty in the point? Do you think it an hard question whether you should turn or not? Why, how can you be so blind? Do you stand pausing upon the busines, as if it were a doubt, whether God or the world were better, and whether sin or holines, Christ or death, Heaven or Hell, were to be preferred? I pray you consider; can you reasonably think that Conversion will do you any harm? Can it bring you into a worse condition than you are in? Sure you cannot fear such a thing: you are in your blood; you are dead in sin; you are children of wrath, while you are unconverted: you are under the curse of the Law of God; you are the slaves of the devil, you are the heirs of hell, and under the guilt of all your sins; your life is a continued rebellion against God; you are employed every day in the destroying of your selves, in kindling the flames that must everlastinglly torment you, and laying in fewel for the perpetuating of your misery; and fighting against your friends that would deliver you, and unthankfully abusing Christ and grace, and Ministers,

and friends that would save your souls. This is the condition that every one of you is in, till you are converted. And can you fear lest Conversion would bring you into a worse condition than this? Sirs, these Truths are sure and plain: and if yet you stick at it, your error is so palpably gross, that unless you are mad men, I may be bold to say, it is a wilful error. And if you *love* to be deceived, and wilfully choose a lie, you must take that you get by it.

3. Consider further, That *half-Conversion* do often prove an occasion of deluding mens souls, and making them quiet in a miserable state, and so of keeping them from being converted to the last. If you had never done any thing in it, you would more easily be perswaded that your case is bad, and that there is still a necessity of your change. But when you have had some convictions, and troubles of mind, and fears and sorrows, and so have fallen into an outside partial reformation, and now are perswaded that you are truly converted, when it is no such matter; what a dangerous impediment to your Conversion may this prove? And all because you slubber over the work, and cut it off before it reacheth to sincerity, and strive against the workings of the Spirit, and break away from your Physician before he hath done the cure, and would not follow it on to the end. I know that a *half-Conversion*, if it be *known* to be no more, is much better than none; and doth often prepare men for a saving work. But when this *half-Conversion* is taken to be a true and saving change, as too commonly it is, it proves one of the greatest impediments of salvation. When ever Christ shall afterwards knock at your door, you will not know him, as thinking that he dwells with you already. If you read any Books that call on you to be converted,

verted, or hear any Preachers that call on you to turn, you have this at hand to couisen your selves with, and frustrate all : You'l think, *This is not spoken to me : For I am Converted already.* O how quietly do such poor deluded sinners, daily read and hear their own doom and misery ; and never once dream that they are the men that are meant, and therefore are never dismayed at the matter ! This formeth you into a state of hypocrisy, and makes the course of your duties and your lives to be hypocritical. If another man that knows himself to be still unconverted, do but read the threatenings of the Word against such, or hear of the terrors of the Lord from a Minister, he may be brought to confess that this is his own case, and so to perceive the misery of his condition. But when such as you do read and hear these things, they never trouble you, for you think that they do not touch you : You are Scripture-proof and Sermon-proof ; and all by the delusion of your *half*-Conversion. O how zealously will such a man cry out against the sins of others : and tell them of their misery, and perswade them to turn, and shew them the danger that is near them if they do not ; and in the mean time little thinks that this is his own case, and that he speaks all this against his own soul. How will such men applaud a Sermon that drives at the Conversion of a sinner, and that tells them their misery while they are unconverted ? O thinks he, this touched such and such : I am glad that such a man and such a man heard it : And he little thinks that it as nearly touched himself. How smoothly will he go on in any discourse against wicked unregenerate men, as *David* heard the Parable of *Nathan*, and it never once entreth into their thoughts that they speak all this against themselves ; till the Judge shall tell them when it is too late, *Thou art the man.* It will turn not only the stream of your thoughts into hypocrisy and self-deceit, but also the stream of your speeches to others :

yea, and the current of your prayers, and all the rest of your religious performances. When in confession you should acknowledge and lament an unregenerate carnal slate, you will only confess that you have the infirmities of the Saints, and that you have this or that sin, which yet you think is mortified. When you should importunately beg for *Renewing* grace, you will beg only for *strengthning* grace, or assurance: when you should be labouring to break your hearts, you will be studying to *heal* them: and will be hearkning after present comforts, when you have more need of godly sorrow. It will fill your mouths in prayer with Pharisaical thanksgivings for the mercies of Regeneration, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, which you never received. Little doth many a soul know what sanctification, and the several graces of the Spirit are, that use to give God thanks for them: There's many and many a one that must for ever be in Hell, that were used in their prayers to give God thanks for their hopes of glory: and the common cause of all this deceit and misery is, that men do run from under the hands of their Physician before he ever went to the bottom of their sore, and go away with a half-conversion, and so spend all the rest of their lives in a mere delusion, as verily thinking they are converted, when they are not. How confidently will such receive the Lords Supper, and thrust themselves into the communion of the Saints, as if they had as good right as others to be there? till the Lord of the Feast shall take them to task, and say, *Friend, how cameſt thou in hither, not having on a wedding garment?* and then they will be speechless, Matth. 22. 12. How many false deceiving comforts, and perhaps even seeming raptures and assurance, may these have in themselves, as verily thinking their case is good, when alas, they never yet laid the foundation? Yea, and it is to be observed, that

that Satan is a friend to the comforts of this kind of men, and therefore will do all that he can to promote them. For he would willingly keep his Garrison in peace, *Luk. 11. 21.* And therefore he may possibly be a comforting spirit to them himself, and imitate the Holy Ghost the Comforter of the Saints: And it may be give them such raptures as seem higher than those which the Spirit of holiness doth give. He envieth the Saints their peace and comfort, because he foresees how durable they will prove: But he can be content that deluded hypocrites may have joy, because *their* comforts do not weaken but strengthen his Kingdom within them, and he knows they are like to endure but for a while.

And thus you may perceive, how hard it is to convert one of these half-converted men, that have strangled the New Creature as it were in the birth, and that are fortified against all the means of grace, by a false conceit that they are sanctified already. See therefore that you make sure work, and take not up in the middle, and with halves, but take your present time, and give up your souls to a total change.

3. Consider, If you take up short of a thorough Conversion, you lose all your labour, and sufferings, and hopes, as to the matter of your salvation.

And what pity is it that so much should be lost? Alas, to see many of our hearers touch at a Sermon, and come to a minister and bewail their sin, and seem to be humbled, and promise to be new men, and yet all this to be lost; How sad a case it this to think of? To see them leave their company and former course of life, and come among the professors of holiness, and all men take them for reall Converts; and yet all this to be lost, and their souls lost after all: How sad a case is this? If you grow

up to the greatest parts for outward duty, and be able to discourse, or pray, or preach, even to the admiration of the hearers; yet if you do not ground this on a through-Conversion, all is but lost, as to your own salvation. If you keep up the highest strain of profession, and get the highest esteem in the Church, so that others depend upon you as Oracles; yea, if the Pope with all his infallibility should canonize you for Saints; it were all but loss. If you should keep up the most confident persuasions of your salvation, and hope to go to Heaven, to the last hour of your lives; it were all but lost if you build not all on a through-Conversion. Yea, if you should be taken by persecutors for one of the party to which you joyn, and should suffer for the cause of Religion among them; all were but lost, without a sound Conversion, *1 Cor. 13. 1, 2, 3.*

It is a pitiful case to see some poor unsanctified souls, how they wander and change from one opinion to another, and from party to party, to find out that which they want within. They turn to this party first, and that party next, and then to another, and then think they are *sure* in the way to Heaven: when they never throughly turned to God by Jesus Christ; and therefore are certainly out of the way, whatever party it be that they joyn with. Some go to the giddy Sects that make the highest pretences to strictnes: And some go to *Rome*, because they think that there they shall have more company, and hear the deluding sound of *Unity*, *Universality*, *Antiquity*, *Succession*, *Miracles*, and such like: And then they think they have hit the way. Alas poor souls! If God were but nearest and dearest to your hearts, and Christ and his Righteousnes exalted within you, and your souls unfeignedly turned from your sins, you would be in the certain way to Heaven, in what Country or company, or Church soever you were; suppor-

supposing that you believe and do nothing there, which is inconsistent with this life of Grace. (Though yet every Christian should choose that particular Society, if he can, where he may not only be saved, but most certainly saved, and find the greatest helps and least hinderances, or else where he may do God the greatest service.) But choose what company you will in all the world, the strictest, the most reformed, the most splendid in outward pomp and glory, or of whatever excellency else you can imagine, you will never be saved in it your selves, as long as your hearts are unconverted. I know the Papists have found out many devices, by Sacraments, and Ceremonies, and the Merits of the Saints, to patch up the defect of a through-Conversion; but all are meer delusions that pretend to such a thing.

O then think of this poor sinner: hast thou gone so far, and done so much, and shall all be lost because thou wilt not follow it to the end? Hast thou groaned, and wept, and confessed and bemoaned thine own condition? Hast thou prayed, and read, and heard, and fasted, and changed thy company, and much of thy course of life? and shall all this be lost, for want of going to the bottom, and making a through work of it? What a loss will this be?

5. Consider also, *What an admirable help and advantage it will be to you through the whole course of your lives, if the work of Conversion be once throughly wrought.* I will shew you this in some Particulars.

First, it will be an excellent help to your understandings, against the grosser Errors of the world, and will establish you in the truth much more than meer Arguments can do: for you will be able to speak for the truth from feeling and experience; he that hath the Law written

written both in his Bible and in his heart, is likely to hold it faster than he that hath it in his Bible alone. But of this I have spoken already in my Treatise against Infidelity, *Part 2.*

Secondly, if you be but thoroughly Converted, you will have that within you which will be a continual help against temptations: you have not only experience of the mischief of sinning, and the folly of those Reasons that are brought for its defence: but you have also *new nature*, which is against the temptation, as life is against poison; and as it is a great disadvantage to the Law of Christ, that it speaks against the *nature* of the ungodly. So is it a disadvantage to the temptations of the Devil, that they would draw a Christian against his *new nature*. You have that *within* you that will Plead more effectually against sensuality, uncharitableness, pride, or worldliness, or any the like sin, than reason or learning alone can do. (As in the forecited Book I have further manifested.)

Thirdly, if Conversion be thoroughly wrought, you will have within you a continual helper of your graces, and a Remembrancer to put you in mind of duty, and a spur to put you on to the performance, and a furtherer of your souls in the performance it self: it is out of the spark and principle within you that the Holy Ghost doth raise the acts of grace. This is it that the Word, a Prayer, and Conference, and Sacraments, and all the means of grace must work upon. If we see you do amiss, we have hopes that you will hear us: if we plainly reprove you, we may look you should take it in good part: for you have that within you that faith as we say, and is deadly enmity with the sin which we reprove. If we provoke you to Love and to good Works, we dare almost promise our selves that you will obey: for you have that within you that disposeth you to the duty, and preaches our Sermons to you over again. O what an advantage

is to our teaching, when you are *all taught of God within*, as well as by his Messengers *without*! But when we speak to the *unconverted*, we have little to work upon: We give Physick to the dead: we speak all against the bent of their souls; and every reproof and exhortation to holiness goes against their very *natures*; and therefore what wonder if we have the smaller hopes to prevail?

Fourthly, if the work be thoroughly done at first, it will help to *resolve many doubts* that may be afterwards cast into your minds. You need not be still at a loss and looking behind you, and questioning your foundation, but may go cheerfully and boldly on. O what an excellent encouragement is this! to know that you have hitherto made good your ground, and left all safe and sure behind you, and have nothing to do but to look before you, and press on towards the mark, till you lay hold upon the prize: whereas if you be in any great doubt of your Conversion, it will be stopping you and discouraging you in all your work: you will be still looking behind you, and saying, *What if I should yet be unconverted?* When you should cheerfully address your selves to Prayer or Sacraments, how sadly will you go, as being utterly uncertain whether you have a saving right to them, or whether God will accept a Sacrifice at your hand? When you should grow and go forward, you will have little heart to it, because you know not whether you are yet in the way; and this will damp your life and comfort in every duty, when you must say [*I know not whether yet I be thoroughly Converted.*] O therefore stop not the work at first.

Fifthly and lastly, if the work be thoroughly done at first, you will persevere, when others fall away. You will have rooting in your selves, entertaining the seed as into depth of earth; and you will have the Holy Ghost within you, and (more than so) engaged for your preservation, and the perfecting of your salvation: when they that received

ceived the Word as seed upon a Rock, and never give it deep entertainment, will wither and fall away in the time of tryal; and from them that have not saving grace, shall be taken away, even that which they seemed to have,
Mar. 13. 12. & 25. 19.

6. And Lastly Consider, *If you fall short of a true Conversion at the first, the Devil will take occasion by it, to tempt you at last to utter despair.* When you have made many essays and trials, and been about the work again and again, he will perswade you that there is no possibility of accomplishing it. If we convince an open prophane person that is unconverted, he may easier see that yet there is hopes of it: but if a man have been *half-converted*, and lived long in a formal self-deceiving profession of Religion, and been taken by himself and others for a godly man, as it is very hard to convince this man that he is unconverted, so when he is convinced of it, he will easily fall into desperation. For Satan will tell him [*If thou be yet unconverted after so many Confessions, and Prayers, and after so long a course of Religion, what hope canst thou have that yet it should be done! Thou wilt never have better opportunities than thou hast had. If such Sermons as thou hast heard could not do it, what hope is there of it? If such Books, and such Company, and such Mercies, and such Afflictions have not done it, what hope canst thou have? Canst thou hear any livelyer teaching than thou hast heard? or speak any holier words than thou hast spoken? If yet the work be quite undone, it is not forsaking another sin, nor going a step further that will do it: and therefore never think of it; for there is no hope: Dost thou not know how oft thou hast tryed in vain? and, What canst thou do more?] And thus you give advantage to the Tempter by your first delays, and taking up in meer Preparatories.*

And

And therefore I beseech you, as you love your souls, take heed of resisting the Spirit of grace, and breaking off the work before it is thoroughly done, but go to the bottom, and follow it on, till it be accomplished in sincerity. And now hoping that upon these considerations you are resolved to do your best; I shall come to the thing which I principally intended; which is to give you certain Directions, which if you will obey, you may be Converts and Saints indeed.

*Direct. I. Lest the Work of Conversion should mis-
carry where it seemeth to be begun, or in a hopeful way,
I first advise you, to [Labour after a right Understan-
ding of the true Nature of Christianity, and the Meaning
of the Gospel which is sent for to Convert you.] You are
naturally slaves to the Prince of darkness; and live in a
state of darkness, and to the works of darkness, and are
hasting apace to utter darkness. And it is the light of
saving knowledge that must recover you, or there is no re-
covery. God is the Father of Light, and dwelleth in
Light; Christ is the Light of the world; his Ministers are
also the Lights of the world as under him; and are sent to
turn men from Darkness to light, by the Gospel which is
the light to our feet: and this is to make us Children of
Light, that we may no more do the works of darkness, but
may be partakers of the Inheritance of the Saints in Light,
2 Cor. 4. 3, 4. 1 Joh. 1. 5. 1 Joh. 1. 5, 9. Jam. 1. 17.
Mat. 5. 14. Act. 26. 18. Joh. 8. 12. 2 Pet. 1. 19. Eph.
5. 8, 13. Col. 1. 12. Believe it, Darkness is not the way
to the Celestial Glory. Ignorance is your Disease, and
Knowledge must be your Cure. I know the Ignorant
have many excuses, and are apt to think that the case is
not so bad with them as we make it to be; and that there
is no such need of Knowledge, but a man may be saved
without*

without it. But this is because they want that knowledge that should shew them the misery of their Ignorance, and the worth of Knowledge. Hath not the Scripture plainly told you, that *If the Gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost, whose minds the God of this world hath blinded lest the Light of the glorious Gospel of Christ, who is the Image of God, should shine unto them?* 2 Cor.

3. 4. I know that many that have much knowledge are ungodly. But what of that? Can any man therefore be godly or be saved, *without* knowledge? You may have a bad servant that yet is skilful enough in his work: but yet you will not mend the matter, by taking one that hath no skill at all. You may send a man on your errand that knows the way and yet will not go it, but loiter and deceive you: But what of that? Will you therefore think to mend the matter, by sending one that knoweth not a step of the way, nor will not learn it? Though a man of knowledge may be the servant of the Devil, yet no man *without* knowledge (that hath the use of his Reason) can be the servant of God. A man *may* go to Hell with knowledge: but he *certainly shall* go to Hell without it. I do not say that you must all be men of learning, and skil'd in the Arts, and Sciences, and Languages: But you must have the Knowledge of a *Christian*, though not of a *Scholar*. Can you love or serve a God that you *Know* not? Can you let go friends, and goods, and life, for a Glory which you have no Knowledge of? Can you make it the principal busines of your lives to seek for a Heaven whose excellencies you know not of? Can you lament your sin and misery, when you are unacquainted with it? Or will you strive against sin as the greatest evil, when you know not the evil of it? Will you believe in a Christ whom you do not know, and trust your souls and all upon him? Will you rest upon a Promise, or fear a Threatning, or be ruled by a Law, which you do not understand? It is not possible

to be Christians without knowing the substance of Christianity: Nor is it possible for you to be saved without knowing the way of salvation.

Labour therefore to be well acquainted with the Grounds and Reasons, and Nature of your Religion. The clearer your Light is, the warmer and livelier your hearts will be. Illumination is the first part of Sanctification. The head is the passage to the heart. O if you did but throughly know what sin is, and what a life it is to serve the flesh, and what the end of this will prove, with what detestation would you cast it away? If you did throughly know what a life of holiness is, how speedily would you choose it? If you did truly know what God is, how infinitely powerful, and wise, and good; how holy, and just, and true, and what title he hath to you, and authority over you, and what an Eternal Portion he would be to you, how is it possible that you could prefer the dirt of the world before him, or delay any longer to return unto him? If you did but truly know, what Christ is, and what he hath done and suffered for you, and what that pardon, and grace, and glory are which he hath purchased for you, and offereth to you, and how sure his Promise is by which it is offered; it is not possible that you should refuse to entertain him, or delay to give up your souls unto him. Do you think a man that truly knows what Heaven is, and what Hell is, can still be in doubt whether he should turn or not? Alas, sirs, if God would but open your eyes, to see where you are, and what you are doing, you would run as for your lives; and quickly change your minds and wayes. You would no more stay in your carnal state, than you would stay in a house that were falling down on your heads, or in a ship that you perceived sinking under you, or on the sands when you see the tide coming towards you. If you did but see your Chamber full of Devils this night, you would not stand to ask whether

whether you should be gone : And sure then if you knew how the Devils are about you, how they deceive you, and rule you, and wait to drag you away to Hell, you would never stay a night longer willingly in such a state. While men understand not what the Gospel means, nor what a Minister saith to them, no wonder if they regard them not, but continue in their sin. If you see a Bear or a mad Dog making towards a man, and tell him of it, and call to him to be gone, if he be a man of another language and do not understand you, he will make never the more haste : but if he understand and believe you, he will away. If people think that Ministers are in jest with them, or that they are uncertain of what they say, no marvel if they hear us in jest, or as men that believe not what they hear : But if you knew that you lives lay on it, yea your everlasting life, would you not regard it and look about you ? Now you stand deliberating and questioning the business whether you should turn, and let go sin, or no : But if you knew that you must certainly have Hell with it if you keep it, methinks your doubt should quickly be resolved, and you should be loth to give another nights lodging to so chargeable and dangerous a guest. Now when we perswade you to holiness of life you will demur on it, as if there were some doubtfulness in the matter : But if you knew the nature and end of holiness, you would soon be out of doubt ; and if you knew but how much happier you might be with God you would never stick at the parting with your most delightful sins. As the Jews rejected Christ, and preferred a murderer before him, and cryed out, *Crucifie him*, all because they did not *know* him, 1 Cor. 2. 8. Job. 8. 5 & 1. 10. Act. 13. 27. So you let Christ knock and call, and offer you salvation, and you stand questioning whether you should obey his call, and whether you should not prefer your lusts before him ; and all because you

know him not, nor the Grace and Glory which he tendereth to you. When men understand not the Reasons of God, that should prevail with them, no wonder if they part not with that which is as dear to them as their lives. But when once they know the *Reasons* of Christianity, those moving, weighty, undeniable Reasons, that are fetcht from God, and Heaven, and Hell, they'll then stand questioning the matter no longer ; but they will resign up all, even life it self. All this I speak of a spiritual, powerful, and a practical Knowledge ; and not of every swimming opinion and conceit.

Study therefore what God is, and what he is to you, and what he would be to you. Study what sin is, and what the damnation is which it deserveth. Study what Christ is, and hath done and suffered for you, and what he is willing to do if you neglect him not. Study what the world is, and what is the utmost that sin will do for you. Study what the everlasting Glory is, which you may have with God, if you lose it not by your folly. And study what Faith is, and what Repentance is, and what Love, and Joy, and a holy and heavenly life, and how little reason you have to be afraid of them. If this *understanding* have but deeply possessed you, it will byas your hearts, and make you resolved settled Converts.

Whereas if you seem to turn, and scarce know why, and seem to take up a Christian life, before you are throughly possessed with the Nature, Grounds, and Reasons of it, no marvel if you are quickly lost again in the dark, and if every Caviller that you meet with can *nonplus* you, and make you stagger, and call in question all that you have done, and ravel all your work : or if you do but run from one party to another, and follow every one that tells you a fair tale, and never know what to fix upon, nor when you are in the way, and when you are out.

The Apprehensions of the mind do move the whole man : *Wisdom* is the *guide* and *stay* of the *Soul*. Sinning is *doing foolishly*, 2 Sam. 24. 10. And sinners are *fools*, Prov. 1. 22. Psal. 75. 4. Their mirth is but *the mirth of fools*, and their song *the song of fools*, Eccles. 7. 4, 5. Yea, the best of their services, while they refuse to hear and obey, is but *the Sacrifice of fools*, Eccles. 5. 1. And such are not fit for the House of God : *For God hath no pleasure in fools*, Eccl. 5. 4. He hath need to have his wits about him and know what he doth, that will be the servant of the God of Heaven, and will escape the deceits of a subtle Devil, and get to Heaven through so many difficulties as are before him. *Above all getting therefore get Wisdom.*

Direct. II. If you would not have the work of your Conversion miscarry, when you *understand* what is offered you, then *Search the Scriptures daily to see whether those things be so or not.*

So did the *Bereans*, *Act. 17. 11.* and the Text saith, that *therefore they believed*. We come not to cheat and deceive you ; and therefore we desire not that you should take any thing from us, but what we can prove to you from the Word of God, to be certainly true. We desire not to *lead you in the dark*, but by the *light to lead you out of darknes* : and therefore we refuse not to submit all our *Doctrine* to an equal *tryal*. Though we would not have you wrong your souls by an unjust distrust of us, yet would we not desire you to take these great and weighty things *merely upon our words* : for then your faith will be in man ; and then no marvel if it be weak, and uneffectual, and quickly shaken : if you trust a man to day, you may distrust him to morrow ; and if one man be of greatest credit with you this year, perhaps another

ther of a contrary mind may be of more credit with you the next year. And therefore we desire no further to be believed by you, than is necessary to lead you up to God, and to help you to understand that Word which you must believe: our desire therefore is that you search the Scripture, and try whether the things that we tell you be the truth. The Word will never work on you to purpose till you see and hear God in it, and perceive that it's he and not man only that speaks to you. When you hear none speaking to you but the Minister, no marvel if you dare despise him; for he is a frail and silly man like yourselves; when you think that the Doctrine which we preach to you is meerly of our own devising, and the conjecture of our own brain, no marvel if you set light by it, and will not let go all that you have, at the perswasion of a Preacher. But when you have searcht the Scripture, and find that it is the Word of the God of Heaven, dare you despise it then? When you there find that we said no more than we were commanded, and God that hath spoken this Word will stand to it; then sure it will go nearer you, and you will consider of it, and make light of it no more. If we offered you bad wares, we should desire a dark shop; and if our gold were light or bad, we would not call for the Ballance and the Touch-stone. But when we are sure the things that we speak are *true*, we desire nothing more than tryal. Beauty and comeliness have no advantage of loathsom deformity, when they are both together in the dark: but the light will shew the difference. Errour may be a loser by the light, and therefore shuns it, *John 3.19,20,21*. But truth is a gainer by it, and therefore seeks it. Let Papists hide the Scripture from the people, and forbid the reading of them in a tongue which they understand, and teach them to speak to God they know not what; we dare not do so, nor do we desire it: our Doctrine

will not go off well in the dark ; and therefore we call you to the Law and to the Testimony, and desire you to take our words into the light, and see whether they be according to the Word of the Lord. Nothing troubleth us more than that we cannot perswade our hearers to this triyal. Some of them are so hardned in their sin and misery, that they will not be at so much labour as to open their Bibles, and try whether we say true or not. Some of them will not trouble their minds with the thoughts of it ; *Psalm 10. 4.* *God is not in all their thoughts.* And some are already too wise to learn ; they will not so long abate their confidence of their former opinions ; though, poor souls, their ignorance doth threaten their damnation. And some are so engaged in a sinful party, that their companions will not give them leave to make so much question of the way that they are in : and some will scarce take the Scripture for the Rule by which they must try and be tryed ; but look more to custom, and the will of those in power over them. And most are unwilling to try, because they are unwilling to know the truth, and cannot endure to find themselves miserable, nor see the sin which they would not leave, nor see the duty which they love not to practise. And thus we cannot get them to try whether the things that we teach them be so,

For want of this it is that men deceive themselves, and think their case to be safe when it is miserable, because they will not try it by the Word. This makes them rage and be confident in their folly, *Prov. 14. 16.* and laugh, and sing, at the brink of Hell, and swim as merrily down the stream to the devouring gulf, as if no evil were near them. This makes them in the depth of misery to have no pity on themselves, and to do so little to escape it : though they have time, and means and helps at hand, yet there are not hearts in them to make use of them ; yea,

yea, they run themselves daily further on the score : and all because we cannot get them to search the Scripture, and try whether sin be so small a matter, and whether this will not be bitterness in the end. Hence it is that they are so easily drawn by a temptation ; and that they dislike an holy life, and have base thoughts of them that are most diligent for salvation, and are most precious in the eyes of God ; and that they can even deride the way that they should walk in, *Prov. 1. 22. Psal. 1. 2.* because they will not search the Scripture to see what it saith to these matters. The Word is a Light, and would do much to open their eyes, and win them over to God, if they would but come to it with a desire to know the truth. You think that the ungodly that are rich and great, are in a better condition than a Godly man that is poor and despised. And why is this ? but because you will not go into the Sanctuary, and see in what a slippery place they stand, and what will be the end of these men, *Psal. 73. 16, 17, 22.* In a word, this is the undoing of millions of souls. They are all their life time out of the way to Heaven, and yet will not be perswaded to ask the way ; but they run on and wink, and put it to the venture. Many a thousand are gone out of the world, before they ever spent the quantity of one day in trying by the Scripture whether their state were good, and their way were right. Nay, let their Teachers tell them that they must be sanctified and take another course, they will differ from their Teachers, though they be never so Wise or Learned ; and they will contradict them, and not believe or regard them. And yet we cannot get them to come to us, and put the case to the tryal, and let the Scripture be the Judge. Would they but do this, they could never sure have such hard thoughts of their Teachers, and be offended at their plainest closest dealing. You would then say [I see now the Minister saies not this of himself ; he speaks but

that which God commandeth him : and if he would not deliver the Message of the Lord, he were unworthy and unfit to be his Embassador : he were cruel to me if he would not pull me out of the fire, by the plainest closest means, *Jude 23.* He hated me, if he would not rebuke me, but suffer sin upon me, *Levit. 19. 17.* If he would please men, he should not be the servant of Christ, *Galat. 1. 10.* I know it is no pleasure to him to trouble me, or to provoke me : but it would be his own destruction if he tell me not of my danger, *Ezek. 3. 18.* And I have no reason to wish him to damn his own soul, and suffer me to do the like by mine, and all for fear of displeasing me in my sin.] These would be your thoughts if you would but try our words by the Scripture, and see whether we speak not the mind of God.

And sure it would go somewhat deeper in your hearts, and it would stick by you, and be more before your eyes, when you once understood that it is the Word of God.

This then is my request to you, Sirs, that the work of your Conversion may not miscarry, that you would carry all that you hear to the Scripture, and search there, and see whether it be so or not : that so you may be put out of doubt, and may be at a certainty, and not stand wavering, and that your Faith may be resolved into the Authority of God ; and so the work may be Divine, and consequently powerful and prevailing, when the Ground and Motive is Divine. If you be not satisfied in the Doctrine which the Minister delivereth to you, first search the Scripture yourselves ; and if that will not do, go to him, and desire him to shew you his grounds for it in the Word of God, and joyn with you in Prayer for a right understanding of it. Do you question whether there be so severe a judgement, and a Heauen and a Hell, as

Ministers

Ministers tell you? Search the Scripture, in *Mat. 25.* and *2 Thes. 1. 8, 9, 10.* *Joh. 5. 29.* *Mat. 13.* Do you question whether a man may not be saved without conversion, regeneration, and holiness? Open your Bibles, and see what God saith, *Joh. 3. 3, 6.* *Mat. 18. 3.* *2 Cor. 5. 17.* *Rom. 8. 9.* *Heb. 12. 14.* Do you think a man may be saved without Knowledge? Let Scripture judge, *2 Cor. 4. 3, 4.* *Joh. 17. 3.* *Hof. 4. 6.* Do you think a man may be saved that doth as the most do, and goeth in the common way of the world? Search the Scripture and see, *Mat. 7. 13.* and *20. 16.* and *22. 14.* *Luke 12. 32.* Do you think an unhumbled Soul may be saved, that never was contrite, and broken-hearted for sin? Try by *Isa. 57. 15.* and *66. 2.* *Psal. 51. 17.* *Luke 4. 18.* *Mat. 11. 28.* Do you think a man can be the Servant of God, that liveth a fleshly life, and will keep his sin? Try by *Rom. 8. 13.* *Joh. 3. 12.* *Ephes. 5. 3, 6.* *1 Joh. 3. 9, 10.* Do you doubt whether it be necessary to make so much ado to be saved, and to be so strict, and make Religion our chiefest business? Try by *Psal. 1. 1, 2, 3.* *1 Pet. 4. 18.* *Heb. 12. 14.* *Luke 10. 42.* *Luke 13. 24.* *Ephes. 5. 15, 16.* Do you think a man can be saved that is a worldling? whose heart is more on Earth than Heaven. Try by *1 Joh. 2. 15.* *Phil. 3. 19.* *Col. 3. 1.* *Luke 14. 26, 33.* Do you doubt whether you should serve God with your families? and instruct them, and pray with them? Try by *Jos. 24. 15.* *Deut. 6. 6, 7.* *Dan. 6. 10, 11.* *Exod. 20. 10.*

Thus if you will in all these weighty matters, but go to the Scriptures, and see whether it say as your Teachers say, you might soon be resolved, and that by the surest authority in the world. If you think that your Ministers may be deceived, I hope you will confess that God cannot be deceived! If you think that your Ministers

Ministers are passionate or self-conceited ; or speak out of ill will to you, I hope you dare not say so by the Lord : he owes you no ill will, nor speaks a word but what is most sure. If you think us partial , sure God is impartial ! what better judge can you have now, than he that is infallible , and must judge you all at the last ? If any Papist put it into your head to ask [who shall be judge of the sense of Scripture] I answer , who shall be judge of the judge of all the world ? The Law is made to judge you , and not to be judged by you. None can be the proper judges of the sense of a Law , but the maker of it : Though others must judge their cases by the Law. Your work is to discern it and understand and obey it ; and our work is to help you to understand it ; but its neither our work nor yours to be the proper , or absolute judges of it. At least where it speaks plain , it needs no judge.

Come then to the word in meekness and humility, with a teachable frame of Spirit , and a willingness to know the truth, and a resolution to stand to it , and yield to what shall be revealed to you , and beg of God to shew you his will , and lead you into the truth , and you will find that he will be found of them that seek him.

Direct. III. If you would not have the work of your Conversion miscarry ; my next advice is this :

See that you be much in the serious Consideration, of the Truths which you understand, betwixt God and you in secret.

I have often spoken of this heretofore ; But because I apprehend it to be a point of exceeding great concernment , I shall be longer on it again , than on the rest.

The greatest matters in the world will not work much upon

upon him that will not think of them. *Consideration* opens the ear that was stopt, and the heart that was shut up: It sets the powers of the Soul a work, and wakeneth it from the sleep of incogitancy and security. The *Thoughts* are the first actings of the Soul, that set a work the rest. Thinking on the mattes that must make us wise, and do the work of God on the heart, is that which lieth on us to do in order to our Conversion. By *Consideration* a sinner makes use of the Truth, which before lay by, and therefore could do nothing. By *Consideration* he taketh in the Medicine to his Soul, which before stood by, and could not work. By *Consideration* a man makes use of his Reason, which before was laid asleep, and therefore could not do its work. When the Master's from home the Scholars will be at play. When the Coach-man is asleep, the Horses may miss the way, and possibly break his neck and their own. If the plowman go his way, the Oxen will stand still, or make but bad unhandsome work. So when Reason is laid asleep, and out of the way, what may not the Appetite do? and what may not the Passions do? and what may not Temptations do with the Soul? A wise man when he is asleep, hath as little use of his wisdom as a fool. A learned man when he is asleep can hardly dispute with an unlearned man that is awake. A strong man that's never so skilful at his weapons, is scarce able in his sleep to deal with the weakest child that is awake. Why all the powers of your Soul are as it were asleep till *Consideration* awake them, and set them on work. And what the better are you for being men and having Reason, if you have not the Use of your Reason when you need it? As men are *Inconsiderate* because they are wicked, so they are the more wicked because they are *inconsiderate*. The keenest sword, the greatest Cannon, will do no execution against an enemy, while they

they lie by and are not used. There is a mighty power in the Word of God, and the example of Christ, to pull down strong holds, and conquer the strongest lusts and corruptions. But they will not do this while they are forgotten and neglected. Will Heaven entice the man that thinks not of it? Will Hell deter the man that thinks not of it? Why is it that all the reasoning in the world, will do no more good on a man that is deaf, than if you said nothing? But because the passage to his Thoughts and understanding is stopt up. And if you have eyes and see not, and ears and hear not, and wilfully cast it out of your thought, what good can any thing do to you that is spoken? It is not holding your meat in your mouth that will nourish you if you will not let it down: nor taking it into your stomach, if you will not keep it but presently cast it up again: But it must be kept till it be digested and distributed. So it is not the most excellent Truths in the world that will change your hearts, if you let them not down to your hearts and keep them not there by Meditation till they are digested and turned into spiritual life. The plaster must be laid upon the sore if you would be cured. The wound and sickness is at your *Heart*: and if you will not take in the word to your *heart*, where the sickness is, I know not how you should expect a cure. The Soul will not be charmed into Holiness, by the bare hearing or saying over a few good words; as wizzards use to cure diseases, or seem to cure them. It must be Truth at the *Heart* that must change the *Heart*. And if you will not *Think* on it, and think on it again, how can you expect it should come at your *Hearts*?

You say you would gladly have Christ and grace, and are ready to lay the blame on God, because he doth not give it you, and say, We cannot convert our selves; But would you have the Spirit come in, while you hold

the

the door against him ? He knocks and desireth you to open and let him in , and you wish him to come in ; but you bolt the door , and no intreaty will procure you to open it. It is Consideration of the saving Doctrine of the Gospel , that openeth the heart , and giveth it entertainment. Set your selves therefore on purpose to this work , and open the doors of your heart which are now shut , and let the King of Glory come in. Who will believe that you love the Light, when you shut the windows , and draw the curtains ? If you will set your selves to consider of the Truth , the windows of your Soul will be set open , and then the light will certainly come in. Now you read over whole Chapters , and hear Sermon after Sermon , and either they never stir you, or at least, its but a little for a fit , like a man that hath a little warmed him at the fire in the winter , and when he goes from it is colder than before ; But if you would but set your selves to consider of what you hear or read , one line of a Chapter , or one sentence of a Sermon would lay you in tears , or make you groan , or at least do more than now is done. Satan hath garisoned the heart of every carnal man : And consideration is the principal means to cast him out. If by considering of the terrible threatenings of the word you would discharge these Cannons of God against them, what a battery would it make in the corruptions of your Souls ! Our God is a consuming fire, and the fire of hell is threatned in his Law, as the wages of sin : By serious Consideration you may as it were , fetch fire from God and from his word , and set to the very gates of Satans garison , and fire him out of many of his holds.

But because this is so needful a point, I shall be so large upon it as 1. To tell you some of those things that you should consider of. 2. To tell you in what manner you should do it. And 3. To give you some Motives to put you on.

1. The

34. The first thing that I would have you oft to think on, is, *The Nature of that God with whom you have to do.* Consider that if he be the most wise, it is all the reason in the world that he should rule you. If he be Good, and infinitely Good, there is all the reason in the world that you should Love him: and there is no shew of reason, that you should love the world or sin before him. If he be faithful and true, his threatenings must be feared, and his promises must not be distrusted; and there is no reason that you should make any question of his Word. If he be Holy, then Holiness must needs be most excellent, and those that are the Holiest must needs be the best, because they are most like to God; and then he must be an enemy to sin, and to all that are unholy, because they are contrary to his nature. Consider that he is Almighty, and there is no resisting him, or standing out against him: in the twink of an eye can he snatch thy guilty Soul from thy body, and cast it where sin is better known. A word of his mouth can set all the world against thee; and set thine own Conscience against thee too: a frown of his face can turn thee into Hell. And if he be thine enemy, it is no matter who is thy friend: for all the world cannot save thee, if he do but condemn thee. They are blessed whom he blesseth, and they are cursed indeed whom he curseth. He was from Eternity, and thou art but as it were of yesterday; thy being is from him: thy life is always in his hands, thou canst not live an hour without him, thou canst not fetch a breath without him, nor think a thought, nor speak a word, nor stir a foot or hand without him: thou maist better live without bread, or drink, or fire, or air, or earth, or water; than without him. All the world is before him, but as the drop of a bucket, or a little sand of dust that should be laid in ballance with all the earth: hadst thou but compassed about this lower world, and seen

seen all the Nations of it , and its wonderfull furniture, and seen the great deeps of the mighty Ocean , and the abundance of Creatures that be in all ? O what thoughts then wouldest thou have of God ! But if thou hadst been above the Stars , and seen the Sun in all its glory , and seen the frame and course of those higher Orbs , and seen the blessed glorious Angels , and all the inhabitants of the higher world , O then what thoughts of God wouldest thou entertain ? O but if it were possible that thou hadst seen his Glory , or seen but his back-parts as *Moses* did , or seen him in Christ the now glorified Redeemer , what apprehensions wouldest thou have of him then ? Then how wouldest thou abhor the name of sin : and how weary wouldest thou be of the pleasantest life that sensuality could afford thee ? Then thou wouldest quickly know , that no love can be great enough , and no praises be high enough , and no service can be holy and good enough for such a God : then you would soon know , that this is not a God to be neglected , or dallyed with : nor a God to be resisted , nor provoked by the wilful breaking of his Laws. It is Eternal Life to know this God , *John* 17. 3. and for want of knowing him , it is that sin abounds in the world. This maketh Holiness so scarce and lean : men worship they *care not how* , because they worship they *know not whom*. O therefore dwell on the Meditations of the Almighty. So far as he doth possess thy mind , there will be no place for sin and vanity. One would think if I should set you no further task , and tell you of no other matter for your Meditation , this one should be enough : for this one is in a manner all. What will not the due knowledge of God do upon the Soul ? That is the best Christian , and the most happy man that knoweth most of him : and that is the most yile and miserable wretch that is furthest

furthest from him, and strangest to him: it is the Character of the fool of fools, to have an heart whose disposition and practice saith, There is no God, *Psalm 14. 1.* that is, to be so affected and employed in their hearts, as if there were no God: and when God is not in all his thoughts, *Psalm 10. 4.* It was better with man when he had less knowledge for himself, and fewer thoughts for himself, and more of God: And there is no way to restore us to sound understanding, and to perfect our knowledge, but to turn our eye upon God again: for in knowing him, we know all that's worth the knowing. Take hold then of the blessed God in thy Meditations, and fill thy thoughts with him, and dwell upon those thoughts. Remember he is always with thee: and where ever thou art, or what ever thou art doing, most certainly he seeth thee. As sure as thou art there, the Lord is there. He knows thy thoughts: he hears thy words, he sees all thy ways. And is such a God as this to be provoked or despised! Were it not better provoke and despise all the world? Is his favour to be slighted? Were it not better to lose the favour of all the world? Consider of this.

2. Another thing that I would have you oft think of, is, *what end you were made for, and what business it is that you came for into the world.* You may well think that God made you not in vain: and that he made you for no lower end, than for himself: and that he would never have made you, nor so long preserved you, if he had not cared what you do. He would never have endued you with a reasonable and immortal soul, but for some high, and noble, and immortal end. Surely it was that you might be happy in knowing him: that he made you capable of knowing him: for he made nothing in vain. It is useful to a horse to know

know his pasture, and provender, and work, and perhaps his Master ; but he needs not know whether there be a God : and accordingly he is qualified. But it is sure mans chief concernment to know that there is a God, and what he is, and how to serve him, and what he is, and will be to us : or else we should never have been capable of such things. And he would never have made you capable of loving him, but that you should be exercised and made happy in that Love. The frame and faculties, and capacity of your Souls, and the scope of Scripture, do all declare, that you were sent into this world, to seek after God, and to Love him, and obey him, and rejoice in him in your measure ; and to prepare for a life of nearer Communion, where you may Enjoy him and please him in the highest perfection. Consider with your selves, whether a life of sin be that which you were made for ? Or whether God sent you hither to break his Laws, and follow your own lusts. And whether the satisfying of your flesh, and the gathering of a little worldly wealth, and the feathering of a nest which you must so quickly leave, be like to be the busines that you were sent about into the world.

3. The next thing that I would have you consider of, is, *How you have answered the Ends of your Creation, and how you have done the business that you came into the world to do.* Look back upon the drift of your hearts and lives : read over the most ancient records of your Consciences : and see what you have been, and what you have been doing in the world till now. Have you spent your daies in seeking after God ? and your estates and strength in faithful serving him ? Have you lived all this time in the admirations of his excellencies, and the fervent love of him, and delightful remembrance of him, and the zealous worship of him ? If you had done this, you had not need of a Conversion. But consider ; Have

you not forgotten what busines you had in the world, and little minded the world that you should have prepared for, and lived as if you knew not him that made you, or why he made you? was sport and merriment the end that you were created for? was ease and idleness, or eating, or drinking, or vain discourses, or recreation, the busines that you came into the world about? was living to the flesh, and scraping up riches, or gaping after the esteem of men, the work that God sent you hither to do? Was this it that he preserved you for, and daily gave you in provision for? What was it to forget him and slight him, and turn him out of your hearts, and rob him of his service and honour; and to set up your flesh in his stead, and give that to it that was due to him? Bethink you what you have done, and whether you have done the work that you were sent to do, or not.

4. The next thing you should use to Consider of is, *How grievously you have sinned, and what a case it is that your sin hath brought you into.* If you take but an impartial view of your lives, you may see how far you have mist your marks, and how far you have been from what you should have been; and how little you have done of that which was your busines: and O what abundance of aggravations have your sins! which I shall pass over now, because I must mention them under another head. It is not only some actual out-breakings against the bent of your heart and life; but your very heart was false, and gone from God, and set in you to do evil.

O the time that you have lost; the means and helps that you have neglected; the motions that you have resisted; the swarms of evil thoughts that have filled your imaginations; the streams of vain and evil words that have flowed from your mouth; the works of darkness, in publick and in secret that God hath seen you in! And all this while, how empty were you in inward holiness,

and

and how barren of goods works, to God or men ? What have you done with all your talents ? and how little or nothing hath God had of all ?

And now consider what a case you are in, while you remain unconverted ; you have made your selves the sinks of sin, the slaves of Satan, and the flesh ; and are skilful in nothing but doing evil ; if you be called to prayer or holy meditation, your *hearts* are against it, and you are not used to it, and therefore you know not how to do it to any purpose : But to think the thoughts of lust or covetousness, or hatred, or malice, or revenge, this you can do without any toil : To speak of the world, or of your sports and pleasures, or against those that you bare ill will to, this you can do without any study. You are such as are spoken of, *Jer. 4. 22.* [*My people is foolish : they have not known me : they are sottish children, and they have no understanding : they are wise to do evil, but to do good they have no knowledge.*] You are grown strangers to the God that made you, in whose love and service you should live and find your chief delights. Your hearts are hardened, and you are dead in your sins. The guilt of the sins of your lives are still upon you : You can neither look into your hearts or lives, no not on one day of your lives, or the best hour that you have spent, but you must see the ugly face of sin, which deserveth condemnation. You have made God your Enemy that should have been your only felicity : And yet you are alwaies at his mercy and in his hands. Little do you know how long his patience will yet endure you ; or what hour he will call away your Souls : And if death come, alas, what a case will it find you in ! how lamentably unready are you to meet him ! how unready to appear before the dreadful God whom you have offended ; and what a terrible appearance do you think that will be to you ? most certainly if you die before you are converted,

you will not be from among the Devils and damned souls an hour. The Law hath cursed you already : and the execution will be answerable, if you die in your sins. And thus you may see the gain of sin, and what it is that you have been doing all this while, for your own Souls; and what a case it is that you have brought your selves into ; and what need you have speedily to look about you.

5. The next step of your Consideration should be this, *Bethink your selves what a blessed Condition you might be in, if by Conversion you were but recovered from the misery, and brought home to God.* This moved the heart of the Prodigal son to return, Luke 15. 16, 17. [*Wher he came to himself he said, How many hired servants of my fathers have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger.*] He that had not husks to feed on with the swine, considered the plenty that he had forsaken at home. The poorest member of the household of Christ is in a better condition than the greatest King on earth that is unconverted. You might have lived another kind of life, than you have done, for safety, and benefit, and true content, if you would have turned your minds and life to God. Were you but Converted, you would be the living members of Christ, and his precious benefits would be yours ; His blood would cleanse you from your sins ; and they would be all freely forgiven you. God would be Reconciled to you, and become your friend, yea your Father and your God ; and will take you for his household servants, and adopted children. the Holy Ghost would dwell in you, and guide your understandings, and shew you that which flesh and blood cannot reveal, and bring you into acquaintance with the mysteries of God : He will be a Spirit of Light and Life within you, and work your hearts yet more to God, and give you yet stronger inclinations and affections to the

things above. He will help you when you are weak, and quicken you where you are dull, and be your remembrancer when you are forgetful of necessary things. He will help you in prayer, both for matter and for manner, and help you in Meditation, and conference and other duties : He will warn you of your danger, and strengthen you against temptations, and cause you to overcome ; and if you fall, he will cause you to rise again : he will be an in-dwelling comforter to you, and so effectually speak peace to you in the midst of your disquietness, that by speaking it, he will create it in you : And in the multitude of your thoughts within you, his comforts will delight your Souls. O what a life might you live, if Christ by his spirit did once live in you ! you may easily conjecture how tender Christ would be of his own members, how dearly he would love them, how constantly he would watch over them, how plentifully he would provide for them, and how safely he would preserve them. And if you should come into a rougher way, he would lead you out : Afflictions should never be laid on you but for your good, and continue no longer than your need continueth them, and be taken off at last to your satisfaction and contentment. Indeed your life would be a life of mercies : and that which is but a common Mercy to common men, would be a special Mercy to you, as coming from your Fathers love, and furthering your salvation, and hinting out to you your everlasting Mercies. You could not open your eyes, but you would see that which may encourage and comfort you ; all the works of God which you behold, would shew you his Majesty, his love and power, and lead you to himself. You could not open your Bible, but you would find in it the blessed lines of Love : O what good it would do you, to read there the blessed Attributes of your God ! to look upon his Name ; to peruse the description of his

most perfect nature ! what good would it do you to read of the nature, and incarnation, and life, and death, and resurrection, and ascension, and intercession, and return of your blessed Redeemer ? what good would it do you to find those holy Rules which your new nature is agreeable to, and to read over the Law, that is written in your hearts, and read the curse from which you are delivered ? what life and joy would your Souls receive from the many, and full, and free promises of grace ! were you once but truly sanctified and made new, your condition would be often comfortable, but alwaies safe ; and when you were in the greatest fears and perplexities, you would still be fast in the arms of Christ ? And what a life wold that be, to have daily acces to God in prayer : to have leave in all your wants and dangers, to seek to him with a promise of hearing and success ; that you may be sure of much more from him, than a Child can from the tenderest father, or a wife from the most loving husband upoh earth ? What a life would it be, when you may alwayes think on God as your felicity, and fetch your highest delights from him, from whom the ungodly have their greatest terrors ? And it is no contemptible part of your benefits that you may live among his people, and in their special love, and have a special Communion with them, and interest in their prayers, and may posses among them the privileges of the Saints, and the Ordinances of God : That instead of idle talk and the unprofitable fellowship of the children of darkness, you may joyn with the Church of God in his Praises, and feed with them at his table on the body and blood of Christ, and then have conveyances of renewed grace, and a renewed pardon sealed to your Souls : But how long should I stay, if I should tell you but one half the blessings of a Sanctified and spiritual state ? In a word, God would be yours, Christ would be yours,

the Holy Ghost would be yours, all things would be yours; the whole world would have some relation to your welfare; Devils would be subdued to you and cast out of your Souls; sin would be both pardoned and overcome; Angels would be ministering spirits unto you for your good: The promises of Scripture would be yours; and everlasting Glory would at last be yours; and while you staid on earth, you might comfort your selves as oft as you would, with the believing foresight of that unconceivable, unspeakable, endless felicity.

O Sirs, what a treasure have I here expressed in a few words! what hearts would you have, if you were but possessed, lively and sensible of all that is contained in this leaf or two! you would not envy the greatest Prince on earth his glory, nor change states with any man that were a stranger to these things. Did you but use to consider of the state of the Saints, how could you keep off, and stay with sin, and make so many delays in turning unto God! Sure this consideration might turn the scales.

6. The next part of your Meditation should be, *Of the gracious and wonderful work of our Redemption, and the means and remedies which are provided for your Souls, and the terms on which Salvation may be obtained.*

For all the sins that you have committed, you are not given over to despair; the Lord hath not left you without a remedy. Your Conversion and Salvation is not a thing impossible. Nay so much is done by Christ already, that it is brought upon reasonable terms even to your hands. A new and living way is consecrated for us by Christ through the veil of his flesh, and by his blood we may have boldness to enter into the Holiest, *Heb. 10. 19, 20.* He hath born your burden; and offereth you in stead of it his burden which is light, *Mat. 11. 28.* He hath removed the Impossibility, and nailed to his Cross the hand-writing that was against you, *Col. 2. 14, 15.* And

in stead of it offereth you his easie yoak. He hath spoiled the Principalities and Powers that had captivated you, and openly triumphed over them on the Cros. You are not left under the care of making satisfaction to God for your own sins, but only of accepting the Redeemer that hath satisfied. This much I dare confidently say to you all, without extending his benefits too far. It will be for want of faith in you, and not for want of satisfaction by the Redeemer, if any of you perish. And how free are his offers? How full are his promises? you are conditionally all pardoned and justified already, as is legible under the hand of God. And the *Condition* which is imposed on you, is not *some meritorious or mercenary work*, but the *Accepting of the benefit freely given, according to its nature, use and ends*. This is the Faith by which you must be justified. These are the terms on which you may be saved. And which is more, the Lord hath provided means, even excellent, and plentiful, and powerful means, for the furthering of your souls in the performance of this Condition, and helping you to Believe, and Repent that you may live: and if the Spirit make not these Means effectual, and adjoyn not his special grace, and after this you remain unconverted, it will not be long of him, but of your selves. So that you may perceive how hopeful a case you are yet in, by the blood of your Redeemer, if you destroy not your own hopes, and make not your case desperate by wilful Impenitency, and refusal of free grace. How fair are you yet for Heaven? and what happy advantages have you for Salvation? Its brought even to your doors; Its thrust as it were into your hands: the Redeemer hath done so much for you all, as to bring your Salvation to the choice of your own wills; and if you be his chosen ones, he will also make you willing. You have precepts to Believe, you are threatened if you will not Believe, you have promise upon promise,

promise, and Christ himself offereth you pardon, and Life, and Salvation with him, if you are but truly and heartily willing. You have God himself condescending to beseech you to accept them: and Embassadors intreating you in his name and stead: 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20. You have Ordinances fitted to your necessities, both Reading, and Preaching, and Sacraments, and Prayer. You have store of plain and powerful Books: you have the Godly about you, most desirous to assist you, that would be glad to see or hear of your Conversion: you have the sight of the wicked, that are wallowing in their own dung, and the dirt of the world, to make you hate such beastly ways. You have Reason and Conscience within you to consider of these matters, and set them home, and apply them to your selves: you have time and strength to do all this, if you will not abuse it, and provoke God to take it from you for your negligence. You have Mercies of many sorts, outward and inward, to win upon you, and encourage you in the work! And sometime Afflictions to remember you, and awaken you, and spur you on; the Devil and all your Enemies are so far disabled, that they cannot destroy you against your wills, nor keep you from Christ, but by your own consents. The Angels of heaven are ready to help you, and would even rejoice at your Conversion. This is your case, and these are your helps, and encouragements: you are not shut up under desperation. God never told you, *It is in vain to think of Conversion*; *It is too late*; If any have told you so, it was the Devil, and not God; and one would think that such Considerations as these should drive the nail to the head, and be effectual to move you to Resolve and Turn.

7. The last thing that I would set before you to be Considered, is, *What's like to be the end of it, if after all this you should die unconverted.*

O Sirs,

O Sirs, your hearts are not able now to conceive of it, nor the tongue of any mortal man to utter it. But so much of it we can certainly utter, as one would think should make your hearts to tremble. You have seen it may be a dying man, in what pangs and agonies he parteth with his Soul: and you have seen its like, the corps that was left there behind; and seen it laid in the common Earth. But you see not what became of the Soul, nor what an appearance it made in another world, nor what company did attend it, nor what a place or state it past into. O Sirs, when the hour is at hand that this must be your own case, it will awaken you to other kind of affections than you have or can have at the reading of these words. Its wonderful that a little distance should make us so insensible of that change which we are all certain will come to pass: and yet through the folly and deadness of our hearts it is so: but they are other kind of thoughts of these weighty matters, which we shall have the next hour after death, than the liveliest affections before hand can afford us.

The misery was great that the Redeemer did find you in, and which you deserved by your sin against the Law of the Creator. But if you be found unconverted at last, your punishment will be much sorcer, and your case far worse than it was before. The Redeemers Law or Golpel, hath its peculiar Threatning, which differeth from the Law of the meer Creator in several respects: even 1. In the nature of the punishment, which will be torments of Conscience for the neglect of a Redeemer, and recovering Grace, which you should never have felt if you had never been Redeemed: 2. And in the Degree of the punishment, which will be far sorcer, *Heb, 10. 29.* And 3. In the Remedilessness of it, the Sentence being irreversible and peremptory; the first Law indeed prvided no Remedy, but it did not exclude

clude Remedy, nor make it impossible; but the Law of Christ doth positively and expressly exclude all Remedy, and leave the Soul that goeth unconverted out of the body, to utter Desperation, and Misery without Help or Hope of end. But I shall not stand now to describe to you the terrors of Judgement or of Hell, because I have done it already in other Books, which I desire you to fetch the rest of this Meditation from; that is, My Treatise of Judgement, and the beginning of my third Part of my Book of Rest.

II. Having told you what should be the Matter of your Consideration, I shall next tell you (but briefly) in what *Manner* you should perform it. And here I shall not stand to prescribe you any long or exact Method for Meditation, both because it agreeth not with my present resolved brevity, and because the Persons that I now deal with, are not capable of observing such Rules; and if any desire such Helps, they may transfer the Directions which are given on another Subject in a Book of Rest, to the Subject now in hand.

I. Do not stay till such thoughts will come of themselves into your minds, but *set your selves purposely to consider of these matters*. Take some time to call your Souls to an account concerning their present state, and their preparations for Eternity. If a Heathen *Seneca* could call himself every night to an account for the evil committed, and the good omitted in the day past, as he professeth that he ordinarily did: why may not even an Unconverted man, that hath the helps which are now among us, bethink himself of the state of his soul? But I know that a Carnal heart is exceeding backward to serious Consideration, and is loth to be troubled with such thoughts as these; and the Devil will do what he can to hinder

hinder it, by himself and others: but yet if men would but do what they may do, it might be better with them than it is. Will you but now and then purposely withdraw your selves from company into some secrer place, and there set the Lord before your eyes, and call your souls to a strict account about the matters that I have mentioned even now, and make it your busines to exercise your Reason upon them; and as you *Purposely* go to Church to hear, so *Purposely* set your selves to this duty of Consideration, as a necessary thing?

2. When you are upon it, labour to waken your souls, and to be very *Serious* in all your Thoughts; and do not think of the Matters of Salvation, as you would do of an ordinary trivial busines, which you do not much regard, or care how it goes. But remember that your Life lyeth on it, even your everlasting Life: And therefore call up the most earnest of your thoughts, and rouse up all the powers of your Souls, and suffer them not to draw-back, but command them to the work; And then set the seyen Points that I mentioned even now before you; And as you think of them, labour to be Affected with them, in some measure according to their exceeding weight. As *Moses* said to *Israel*, *Deut. 32. 46.* *Set your Heart to all the words which I testifie among you this day; which ye shall command your children to do, &c.* For it is no a vain thing for you; because it is your life. And as *Christ* said, *Luke 9. 44.* *Let these sayings sink into your ears.* So I say to you, Let the Matters which you think of, go to your hearts, and sink down to the quick of your affections.

And if your hearts would slip away from the work, and other thoughts woudl creep into your mind, and you are weary of these Considerations before they have done their work, see that you give not way to this laziness, or unwillingness, but remember it is a work

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that *Must* be done, and therefore hold your Thoughts upon it, till your hearts are stirred, and warmed within you.

And if after all, you cannot awake them to *Seriousness* and *Sensibility*, put two or three such wakening Questions as these to your selves.

1. *Quest.* What if it were but the *ease* of my body, or state, or name, should I not earnestly consider of it? If one do but wrong me, how easily can I think of it, and how tenderly do I feel it; and can scarce forget it? If my good name be blemished, and I be but disgraced, I can think of it night and day: If I lose but a beast, or have any *Cross* in the world, or decay in my Estate, I can think of it with sensibility: If I lose a child or a friend, I can feel it as well as think on it. If my health be decayed, and my Life in danger, I am in good earnest in thinking of this. And should I not be as serious, in the Matters of Everlasting life? Should I not think of it, and soberly, and earnestly think on it, when body and Soul do lie at the stake, and when it concerneth my everlasting Joy or Torment?

2. *Quest.* What if I had but heard the Son of God himself calling on me to Repent, and be Converted, and seconding his Commands with that earnest expression, (*He that hath an ear to hear let him hear*) would it not have brought me to some serious Thoughts of my state? Why this he hath done in his Word, and doth it by his Embassadors, and why then should I not consider it?

3. *Quest.* If I did but know that death were at my back, and ready to arrest me and that I should be in another world before this day sevennight, I should then begin to bethink me in good sadness: And why do I not so now, when I have no hold of my life an hour, and when I am sure that shortly that time will come?

4. *Quest.*

4. *Quest.* If my eyes were but open to see that which I pretend to believe, and which is certainly true; even so see a glimpse of the Majesty of the Lord, to see the Saints in Joy and Glory, to see the damned Souls in Misery; and if I heard their lamentations, would not this even force my heart to Consideration? O then how earnestly should I think of these things? And why should I not do so now, when they are as sure as if I saw them, and when I must see them ere it be long?

Many more such awakening Questions are at hand, but I give you but these brief touches on the things that are most common and obvious, that the most ignorant may be able to make some use of them. With such thoughts as these, you must bring on your backward hearts, and shake them out of their insensibility, and awaken them to the work.

III. When you have brought your hearts to be serious, *be sure that you drive on your Considerations to a Resolution.* Break not off in the middle, or before you bring the matter to an issue; But let all be done in order to Practice. When you have been Thinking of the excellencies of God and the world to come, and comparing them with all the delights on earth; put the question then to your hearts, and say, *What saist thou now, O my Soul? which of these is the better for thee? which is the more desireable? and which of them shouldst thou prefer?* Resolve then, and make thy choice according to the light, and convictions which thou hast received. When you are thinking of the Reasons that should move you to be Converted, ask your selves, *Whether these Reasons be not clear, and what you have to say against them? and whether any thing that can be said to the contrary can prove it better for you to be as you are, and to remain un-*

cont.

converted? Ask your selves, Is my Judgement Resolved, or is it not? And if it be (as sure it must be, if you be not besides your selves) then write it down under your hands, or at least in your hearts, I do here confess before the Lord, that his Commands are just, his motions are Reasonable, his offers are exceeding Merciful: I am satisfied that its best for me to Turn to him speedily, and with all my heart? I confess before him that I have no reason to the contrarie that deserves to be owned, and called Reason; This is my own Judgement; of this I am Convinced: If I Turn not after this, the Light that is in me, and the Judgement that I now possess, must needs be a witness against my Soul. If you would but thus drive on the case to a Resolution of your Judgements, you would have a great advantage for the resolving of your wills, which is the next thing that you must proceed to. And therefore next ask your selves, Why should I not now Resolve and fixedly Resolve, to Turn without any more delay? Is not the case plain before me? What Reason have I to stand questioning the matter any longer, and to be unwilling to be happy? Shall I provoke God by delaying with him, and hazard my Soul by lingering out my time, in such a miserable state? No; by the Grace of God I will Return; Even this hour, without any more delay. Thus drive on all your Consideration to resolution (But of this, I have more to say anon.)

By this time you may see of what necessity this duty of Consideration is, and how it must be performed, that it may further your Conversion: But because it is a matter of so great Necessity, I am loth to leave it thus, till I have done what I can to perswade you to the practice of it. To which end I intreat you to think of these following Motives.

1. *Consideration* is a duty that you may perform if you will. You cannot say that it is wholly out of your power; So that you are left unexcusable, if you will not be per-swaded to it. You say, you cannot Convert your selves: But cannot you set your selves to *Consider* of your ways, and bethink you of those Truths that must be the Instruments of your Conversion? Your Thoughts are partly at the command of your will: You can turn them up and down from one thing to another. Even an unsanctified Minister that hath no saving relish of Spiritual things, can think of them, and spend most of his time in thinking of them, that he may preach them to others: And why cannot you than turn your thoughts to them for your selves? You can think of House and Land, and Friends, and Trading, and of any thing that ayleth you, or any thing that you want, or any thing that you love, or think would do you good. And why cannot you think, of your sin, and danger of God, and of his Word and Works, of the state of your Souls, and of Everlasting Life? Are you not able to go sometimes by your selves, and Consider of these matters? Are you not able when you are alone in your beds, or as you travel in the way, or at your labour, to bethink you how things stand with your Souls? Why are you not able? what is it that could hinder you, if you were but willing?

2. Yea further *Consideration* is so cheap a Remedy, that if you will not use this, you despise your Souls: yea and you despise the Lord himself, and the Ever-lasting things which you are called to Consider of. A man that is in danger of losing his estate, or health, or life, and will not so much as bethink him of a Remedy, doth sure set light by them, and lose them by his contemp. A man that had but his house on fire, and would not so much as *Think* how to quench it, doth de-serv-

serve that it should be burnt: If your Parents, or Children, or Friends were in distress, if you would not so much as *Think* of them, it were a sign you did not set much by them. Why Sirs, are not your Souls worth the *Thinking* on? Is not God, is not your Redeemer worth the *Thinking* on? And yet you will hypocritically pretend that you love God above all, when you will not so much as seriously *Think* of him; How can you shew greater contempt of any thing, than to cast it out of your minds as unworthy to be thought on? And how can you more plainly shew that you despise God, and Heaven, then by such a course as this? If it be not worth the *Thinking* on, its worth nothing.

3. Consider that God doth not set so light by your Salvation. He thought it worth a great deal more: must Christ think it worth his bloody sufferings and worth such a life of labour and sorrow, and will not you judge it worth your *serious* Consideration? If he had not *Thought* on it, and *Thought* again, how miserable should we have remained? Ministers also must *Think* on it, and *Study* how to save your souls: And should you not *Study* how to save your own? Must another man make it the busines of his life to *Think* how to do you good, that may be saved? and are you not as much bound to do good to your selves? Yea, all that fear God about you are bound to *Study* to do you good; and should you not *bethink* you then of the things that concern your own good?

4. Moreover, what have you your Reason for, but to *Consider*? And wherein do you differ from the beasts, so much as in your Reason? If you have Reason, and will not use it, you brutifie your selves; You live like mad-men: for what is Madness, but a los of the use of Reason? And do you think it a small thing to deface so noble a Creature as man, and to turn your selves into

beasts, and mad-men? Do you thinke that God will not call you to account for your reason, how you have used it? Doubtless he gave it you for an higher employment, than to enable you to plow, and sow, and follow your trades, and provide for your flesh. If this were all that a man did exceed a beast in, what a silly wretched wight were man? Yea so much more miserable than beasts, as his knowledge begets more care, and sorrow, and fear, than theirs. What matter is it for *having* Reason at all, if it be not that we may use it for the matters of God, and Eternal life?

5. Moreover, your Soul is an Active Principle, which will be working one way or other: your *Thoughts* will be going on one thing or other; and therefore the bare Consideration is no great labour to you. And if you *must* lay out your thoughts on some thing, is it not better lay them out on *these* things, than on any other? Have you any better matters to think on than these? Have you any Greater matters? or matters of greater Necessity to think of? you cannot sure imagine it; at least you will not say so for shame. This makes your *inconsiderateness* an unexcusable sin. If *Thinking* were a toil to you, it were another matter. But when you must Think of *something*, why not of God, and your Eternal state, and the way to Heaven, as well as of other matters? Will you rather throw away your *Thoughts* than God shall have them? If a man command his servant that is lame, to go on his business, the refuser hath a good excuse: *I cannot go, or not without great pain and danger*; but if he have a son or a servant that is so wanton that he cannot stand on his legs, but spends his time in running up and down and dancing and leaping, this person hath no excuse, if he will refuse to go on his Masters or his Fathers Errand; but will gad about on his pleasure all day, and will not go

few steps when he is bidden ; especially if it were for his own life, or welfare. So when you have *Thoughts* that *will not* be kept idle, but will be gadding abroad through the world, and yet you will not think of God, and the matters of your peace, what wilfulness is this? If you should ask one that hath it not, for meat or drink, or money, they might well deny you. But if you ask these of one that hath abundance, and knows not what to do with them, but would throw them down the channel rather than you should have them, what would you think of such a one? Especially if it were you servant or your child that owed you much more? Thus do you by God, and your own souls. You have *Thoughts* enough and to spare, you know not what to do with them ; and yet rather than you will spend one hour in a day or a week in serious *Thoughts* of the state of your souls, and the life to come, you will cast them away upon news, and tales, and other folks busines that *do* not concern you ; yea, you will cast them down the sink of Covetousness, and Malice, and Lust, and Wantonness, and make them servants to the Devil and the flesh. If you have a brook running by your Land, you will endeavour to turn it over your ground ; that seeing it *must* run, it may as well run that way where it may do good, as run in vain. So when your thoughts *must* run, is it not better that you turn them to your own hearts, and states, to prepare for the world that you are ready to step into, than to let them run in vain? If you see a man go into a wine seller, (though it be his own) and pull out all the spigots, and let all the wine run about the seller, and suffer no body to catch it, or be the better for it, what would you conceive of the wisdom and charity of that man? Your *thoughts* are a thing more precious than wine, and such a thing as should not be spilt: And yet is not this your every-days practice? You

are before him that knows your thoughts : deny it if you can. What hour of the day , can a man come to you, and find your *Thoughts* altogether idle? What minute of an hour can a man come and ask you , *What are you now Thinking on?* and you can truly say , *Nothing!* I know as long as you as you are awake you are alway thinking of somewhat , (and perhaps when you are asleep) and what is it on ? This body shall have a Thought : and that body a Thought : every word you hear , and every wrong that's done you , and almost every thing you look upon , shall have a Thought : and God and your own Salvation shall have none : that is, you will lose them, and let them run in wast ; but you will do no good with them , nor take in any profit by them, to your selves.

6. Have you any thing that better deserves your Consideration , than God , and your Salvation ? Certainly God hath more right to your *Thoughts* than any thing else that you can place them on. Your flesh , your friends , your worldly business are neither so honourable, so necessary , or so profitable Subjects , as God and Heaven are. As there is more profit to be got by the tillage of fruitful Land, than barren Heath ; or by digging in a mine of Gold , than in a Clay-pit : So there more pleasure and profit to be gotten in one hour serious *Thoughts* of your Salvation , than in thinking a your life-time of the world.

7. At least methinks you should consider , how proportionably and unequally you lay out your *Thoughts*. Cannot you spare God the Tents ; no not the hundredth part of them ? Look back upon your lives, and trace your *Thoughts* from day to day , and tell me how many hours in a week , in a month , in a year , you have spent serious *Thoughts* of the state of your Souls , and of the life to come ? Is it one hour of an hundred , of a thousand

of ten thousand, with some of you that is thus spent? Nay I have very great cause to fear that there are some, yea that there are many, yea that there s far the greatest number, that never spent one hour since they were born, in withdrawing themselves purposely from all other businels, and soberly, and in good sadness bethinking themselves what case they are in, what Evidence they have of their Title to Salvation, or how they must be justified at the bar of God; no nor what businels they have in the world, and to what end they were made, and how they have done the work that they were made for. Ah Sirs, doth Conscience justify you in this? Or rather will it not torment you one day to remember it? What? did thy Land, and Livings, wordly matters deserve *all thy Thoughts*, and did not the saving of the Soul deserve some of them? Did thy lusts, and sports, and wantonness deserve all; and did not God deserve some of them? Was it not worth now and then an hours time, no nor one hours study in all thy life, to bethink thee in good sadness how to make sure of a life of endless Joy and Glory, and how to escape the flames of Hell? This is not an equal distribution of thy *Thoughts*, as thou wilt confess at last in the horror of thy Soul.

8. It is the end of your present time and warnings, that you may consider, and prepare for your Everlasting state. What have you to do on earth but to Consider how to get well to Heaven? O that you did but know what a mercy it is, before you enter upon an endless life, to have but time to bethink you of it, and to make your Election sure! If you were to be called away suddenly this night, and the Angel of the Lord should say to any of you, *Prepare; for within this hour thou must die, and appear before the living God.* Then would you not cry out, *O not so suddenly Lord! Let me have a little more time to consider of my Condition: Let me have one*

month longer, to bethink me of the case of my Soul, and to make sure that I am Justified from the guilt of my sins, Let me have one day more at least to prepare for my Everlasting state ; for alas, I am yet unready. Would not these be your cries, if God should call you presently away ? And yet now you have time, you will not Consider of these matters and prepare.

9. Moreover, is it not time for you to Consider your ways, when God doth Consider them ? If he would forget them, or did not regard them, you might regard them the less your selves : But be sure of it, he doth observe them, whether you do or not ; and he remembreth them though you forget them. Dost thou not know that all the sins of thy life are still on record before the Lord ? saith Job 14. 16, 17. *Thou numberest my steps ; dost thou not watch over my sin ? My transgression is sealed up in a bag, and thou satest up mine iniquity.* Do you think that God forgets your sins, as you forget them ? saith the Lord by the Prophet Hosea. 7. 2. *They Consider not in their hearts, that I remember all their wickedness ; Now their doings have beset them about, they are before my face :* But, you'll say, What if God do Consider our ways ? why surely then it is not for nothing, but evil is near if not prevented. As the Lord saith in Deut. 32. 34. 35. *Is not this laid up in store with me, and sealed up among my Treasures ? To me belongeth vengeance, and recompence : their foot shall slide in due time : For the day of their calamity is at hand, and the things that shall come upon them make haste.* If God be registering up thy sins, thou hast cause to tremble, to think what that portends. For in this hardness and impenitence of thy heart, thou art treasuring up wrath, against the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous Judgements of God, Rom. 2. 5. As Grace is the seed of Glory, so sin is the seed of shame, and trouble : and everlasting Torment : and though

though it may seem long before the Harvest, you will taste the bitter fruit at last; and whatsoever you have sowed, that shall you reap.

10. Moreover, if any thing ail you, you look that God should presently *Consider* you: Or if you want any thing, you think he should *Consider* your wants: And yet will you not *Consider* of him, and of your own wants? When you are in trouble, you'll cry to God, *Have Mercy upon me, O Lord, Consider my Trouble*, Psal. 9. 33. *Consider and hear me, O God.* Mat. 13.

3. When you lie in pain and sickness, you'll then cry to God, *Consider mine affliction, and deliver me*, Psal. 119.

153. If you be oppressed or abused, you'll groan as the *Israelites* under their Task-masters, and herhaps cry to God, as the captived people, *Lam. 1. 11. See O Lord, and Consider; for I am become vile; Remember O Lord, what is come upon us; Consider and behold our reproach*: ch. 5. 1. & 2. 20. And must God *Consider* of you, that will not *Consider* of him; or your own Souls? Or may you not rather expect that dreadful answer, which he gives to such regardless sinners, *Prov. 1. 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30.* And hear your cries, as you hear his *Counsel*, and think of you, as you thought of him.

Nay more than so; even while you forget him, the Lord doth daily *Consider* you, and supply your wants, and save you from dangers; and should you then cast him out of your Thought? if he did not think on you, you would quickly feel it to your cost and sorrow.

11. Moreover the Nature of the Matter is such, as one would think, should force a Reasonable creature to consider of it, and often and earnestly to consider. When all these things concur in the matter, he must be a block or a mad man that will not *Consider*. 1. When they are the most excellent, or the greatest things in all the world. 2. When they are our own matters, or

neerly concern us. 3. When they are the most necessary, and profitable, and delightful things. 4. When there is much difficulty in getting them, and danger of losing them; And all these go together in the matter of your Salvation.

1. If you will not think of God, and your Souls, of Heaven, and Hell, what then will you think of? All other things in the world are but toys, and jesting matters to these. Crowns, and Kingdoms, Lands, and Lordships are but chaff, and bawbles, dirt and dung, to these Everlasting things. The acts of renowned Kings and Conquerors, are but as Popet-plays, in Comparison of the working out of your Salvation. And yet will you not be drawn to the *Consideration* of such astonishing things as these? One would think that the exceeding Greatness of the matter should force you to Consider it whether you will or no: when smaller Objects affect not the Sences, yet Greater will even force their way. He that hath so hard a skin that he cannot feel a feather, methinks should feel the weight of a mil-stone; And if he feel not the prick of a pin, methinks he should feel a dagger. He that cannot hear one whisper, methinks should hear a Cannon, or a clap of Thunder, if he have any such thing as hearing left him. He hath bad eyes that cannot see the Sun. One would think that so Glorious an Object as God, should so entice the eyes of men, that they should not look off him. One would think that such matters as Heaven and Hell should follow thy thoughts which way ever thou goes, so that thou shouldest not be able to look besides them, or to think almost of any thing else, unless with great neglect and disesteem. O what a thing is a stony heart, that can forget not only the only the God that he liveth by, but also the place where he must live for ever? Yea that will not be perswaded to the *Sober Consideration* of it for one hour.

2. And

2. And as these are the Greatest matters, so they are your *Own* matters, and therefore one would think you should not need so much ado to bring you to Consider them. If it were only *other mens* matters, I should not wonder at it. But *self-love* should make you regard your *Own*. In outward matters, all seek their *Own* things, *Phil. 2. 21.* And have they not more Reason to seek their *Own* Salvation? It is your *Own* Souls, your *Own* danger, your *Own* sin, your *Own* duty, that I perswade you to Consider of. It is that God, that Christ, that would be your *Own*: it is that Heaven, that blessednes that may be your *Own*, if you lose it not by neglect: It is that Hell, and torment, that will certainly be your *Own* if you prevent it not. And should not these be thought on? You will think of your *Own* goods, or lands, or riches; of your *Own* families, your *Own* busines, your *Own* lives, and why not also of your *Own* Salvation?

3. Especially, when it is not only your *Own*, but it is the *One thing needful*. *Luke. 10. 42.* It is that which your life, or death, you Everlasting Joy or Torment lieth on: and therefore *must* be Considered of, or you are utterly undone for ever, Necessity lieth upon you; and woe be to you, if you Consider not of these things. It is not so necessary that you eat, or drink, or sleep, or live, as it is Necessary that you make sure your Everlasting life. And the Profit also doth answer the necessity. Buy but this one Pearl, and you will be infinite gainers, though you sell all that you have in the world to buy it. *Matth. 13. 44, 45, 46.* Get God, and get all: make sure of Heaven, and then fear no loss, nor want, nor sorrow. If you count not all the world as dung, for the winning of Christ, that you may be found in him, possessed of his righteousness, it is because you know neither the world, nor Christ, *Phil. 3. 7, 8, 9.*

Yea

Yea the Delight also will answer the Commodity ; *For in the presence of God is fulness of Joy, and at his right hand are pleasures for evermore*, Psal. 16. 11. And the forethoughts of them may well make glad our hearts , and cause our Glory to rejoice, Psal. 16. 8,9. For Goodness and Mercy shall follow us all the days of our lives , and we shall dwell in the House of the Lord for ever : Psalm 23.6. *He shall guide us with his Counsel, and afterward receive us into Glory.* Psal. 73. 24. And lest yet you should suspect any lack of Comfort , he tells you , you shall enter into the Joy of your Lord, Math. 25. 23. *Aid that you shall be with him where he is, to behold his Glory,* Joh. 17. 24.

4. And yet if all this might be had with a wet finger, If Heaven were the portion of worldlings, and sluggards, that trouble not their Thoughts much about it , then you might have some excuse for you inconsiderateness. But it is not so : there are difficulties in your way ; and they are many and great : what a dark understanding have you to inform ? what a dull and backward nature to spur on ? What an unreasonable appetite ? What raging passions ? What violent rebellious senses to contend with , to Master and to rule ? Abundance of adversaries on every hand : A subtil Devil , and as malicious as subtil : and as furious and able to do you a mischief , if God restrain him not. A world of wicked men about you : each one more stiff in Errour, than you in the Truth ; and more fast to the Devil than you are to God , (if his grace do not hold you faster than you will hold your selves :) and therefore they are abler to deceive you, than you are to undeceive them : many of them are crafty, and can puzzle such ignorant beginners as you : and put a face of reverence and truth upon damnable Errors , and pernicious ways : and those that have not wit , have foolish violence , and scorn and passion , and can drive you towards

towards Hell, if they cannot draw you. All these enemies you must Conquer, or you are lost. And is it not time for a man in so much danger to *Consider* of them, that he may know how to escape? And for one that is compassed about with such difficulties, to *Consider* how he may well get through them. What abundance of things have you to *Consider* of? of all your life past; of the Relations you have born: and how you have performed the duties of those Relations? Of the time you have had; and how you have spent it? Of the means you have had, and what you have received by them: of the present state of your Souls, your sins, your miseries, your hopes, and the duties that are incumbent on you, in order to your recovery. Of the temptations to be encountered with; and the graces that are daily to be exercised and confirmed, should not a man bethink himself with all possible care, and *Consider*, and an hundred times *Consider*, that hath all this to do, or be undone for ever? You have much to Know that will not easily be known, and yet must be known: and much to do, receive, and suffer, that hath difficulty joyned with Necessity: were it Necessary and not hard, the facility might draw you to make light of it. And were it hard, and not Necessary, the difficulty might more discourage you than the matter would excite you: but when it *Must* be done, or you must be shut out of Heaven, and lie in Hell for it world without end; and yet there are so many difficulties in the way, I think its time to look about you, and seriously *Consider*.

12. To conclude; *Consideration* would prevent a world of misery, which else will make you *Consider* when it is too late. It must be a principal means of your Salvation if ever you be saved. If God have so much Mercy for you, he will *make* you *Consider*; and set your sins in order before you, *Psal. 50. 21.* and set Hell-fire before

fore your face, and hold your Thoughts on it, that you cannot look off. He will set before you a Crucified Christ, and tell you, that this your sins have done, and make you think of the Reason of his sufferings; and what there is in sin that could require it; and what it is to rebel against the Lord, and run your selves into the consuming fire. Now your thoughts are gadding abroad the world, and straggling after every triffe, and going away from God: but if ever God will save you, he will overtake your hearts, and seich them home, and shew them that they have somewhat else to think on. If Commands will not serve, he will send out his threatenings, and terrors shall come upon you, and pursue your soul as the wind, *Job 33. 15.* He'll fetch you out of the Ale-house, and the Gaming house, and take you off the merry pin, and lay that upon your heart, that you shall not easily shake off. If you are taken up with the cares of the world, he'll shew you that you have somewhat else to care for, and drown those cares in greater cares. If you have such giddy, unsettled, vagrant minds, that you cannot call in your Thoughts to God, nor hold them with him; he will lay those clogs and bolts upon them at first, that shall restrain them from their idle vagaries: and then he will set upon them such a byass, as shall better order them, and fix them for the time to come. Men do not use to go to Heaven, and never think of it: And to scape Hell fire, and the plague of sin, and the curse of the Law, and the Wrath of God, and the rage of Satan, and never think on it: nor do they use to mind other matters, and find themselves in Heaven, before they ever dream'd of it, or before their hearts were set upon it. No Sirs, if ever God will save you, he will make you Consider, and again Consider, and perhaps with many a sigh and groan; and bring these things so near your hearts, that you shall not only think

think on them, but feel them: according to that Command, *Deut. 6. 6, 7. and 11. 18, 19, 20.* They shall be as written before your eyes: you shall think of them when you lie down, and when you rise up, as if they were written upon the texture of your beds: you shall think of them when you sit at home, when you go abroad, as carrying them still with you, which way soever you go. As before God was not in all your thoughts, so now he will be the sum and end of them all.

And if by your Resistance you scape these Considerations, believe it, God will bring you to *Consideration* by a severer and more dreadful way. If he do but give your Conscience a Commission, it will follow you, and bring you to such a Consideration as *Iudas* was brought to. If he lay you under his Judgements, and speak to you by his Rod, and give you a lash with every word, and ask you whether yet you will *Consider* of it? It may bring such things to your Thoughts, as you were little troubled with before. If he say but the word, how soon will your Soul be required of you? and when you lie in Hell and feel the smart, you will then *Consider* of it. Now we cannot beg of you to bestow one hour in sober Consideration: but then you shall do it without intreaty: then you will be as a man that hath the Stone, or Gout, or Tooth-ake, that cannot forget it, if he would never so fain. Forget your folly, your obstinacy, and unthankfulness, then if you can. Forget Gods wrath, and the torment which you feel, then if you can. Now you were so busie that you could not have while to think of the matters of the world to come; but then God will give you leisure; you shall have little else to do: you shall have time enough: when you have thought of these things ten thousand years, you shall still have time enough before you to think of them again. You will not Consider now, but, when God bath performed the intents of his heart,

heart, in the latter days you shall perfectly Consider it, Jer. 23. 20. & 30. 24. O that you were wise, that you understood this; that you would Consider your latter end, Dent. 32. 29.

What brings so many thousand souls to Hell, but because they would not Consider in time; If you could speak with any of those hopeless souls, and ask them, How came you to this place of torment? they would tell you, because we did not consider of our case in time: We little thought of this day, though we were told of it; we had a load of sin upon us, and did not Consider how we might be relieved: we had Christ, and Mercy set before us, but we did not Consider the worth of them, nor how to be made partakers of them: we had time, but we Considered not how to make the best of it. We had the work of our Salvation lay upon our hands; but we did not Consider how we might accomplish it: O had we but Considered what now we feel, we might have escaped all this, and have lived with God! These would be the answers of those miserable souls if you could but ask them the cause of their misery. There is scarce a Thief or Murderer hanged at the Gallows, but will cry out, O if I had but had the wit, and grace to have Considered this in time, I need not to have come to this! There's scarce an unthrift that falls into beggary, no nor a man that comes to any mischance, but will say, If I had Considered it before hand, I might have prevented it. Most of the Calamities of the world might have been prevented, by timely and sober Consideration. God himself doth place mens wickednes much in their Inconsideratenes, and lays the cause of their destruction upon it. Whence is it that Israel was rebellious to astonishment, Isai. 1. 3. Why, Israel doth not know, my people doth not Consider. Job 34.25,26,27. He shall break in pieces mighty men without number, and set others in their stead: therefore he knoweth

knoweth their works, and he overturneth them in the night, so that they are destroyed. He striketh them as wicked men in the open sight of others, because they turned back from him, and would not Consider any of his ways. Why do men live so wilfully in sin, but because They Consider not that they do evil? Eccle. 5. 1. How many such hath the world that God pronounceth a Wo to? Isa. 5. 11. 12. that drink, and play, and give themselves to their merriments, but they regard not the work of the Lord; neither consider the Operation of his hands. They consider not in their heart the folly of their ways, Isa. 44. 18, 19, 20. When they see Gods Judgements, they consider not the meaning of them, and therefore lay them not to heart, Isa. 57. 1, 2.

And when God calleth men to Conversion, or Reformation, he useth to call them to consideration as the way to it. Hag. 1. 5. *Thus saith the Lord of Hosts, Consider your ways.* The Son that shall escape the misery of his Fathers, is he that Considereth, and turneth away from his transgressions, and Considereth, and doth not his Forefathers work, Ezek. 18. 14, 20. And when he sendeth the Prophet to them, Ezek. 12. 3. it is but with this encouragement; *Though they are a rebellious house, it may be they will Consider.* And David professeth, that Consideration was the beginning of his Conversion, Psal. 119. 59. *I thought on my ways, and turned my feet unto thy Testimonies. I made haste and delayed not to keep thy Statutes.*

I know that it is the Lord, that must renew and revive a sinful Soul: But yet under God, Consideration must do much. O could we but persuade our people to Consider, it is not sure possible that they could be as they are, or do as they do. Would so many thousands live in ease, and quietness under the guilt of so many sins, and the wrath of God, if they did but well Consider of it?

Durst

Durft they live so peaceably in a state of death , and in the slavery of the Devil , if they did but well *Consider* of it ? Would they do no more to prepare for their speedy appearing before God , and for the scaping of Hell fire , if they did but *Consider* of it ? Would they swallow down their cups so greedily , and give up themselves to the world so eagerly , if they did but well *Consider* what they do ? Methinks they should not . The cause of sin , and the Devil is so naught , that I should hope to shame it with the most of the ungodly , if I could but bring them to a serious *Consideration* of it . O how the Kingdom of Satan would down , if we could but tell how to make them *Considerate* ! How fast the Devil would lose his servants ! What abundance Christ would gain ! And how many would be saved , if we could but tell how to make men *Considerate* ! And one would think that this should be easily done , seeing man is a self-loving , and reasonable Creature : But yet to our grief , and great admiration , we cannot bring them to it . I should not doubt , but one Sermon , or one Sentence of a Sermon , might do more good than a hundred do now , if I were but able to perswade the hearers , when they come home , to follow it by serious *Consideration* . But we cannot bring them to it : If our lives lay on it , we could not bring them to it : Though we know that their own lives and Salvation lieth on it , yet can we not bring them to it . They think , and talk of other matters , almost as soon as the Sermon 's done : and they turn loose their Thoughts ; or if they do read , or hear , or repeat a little ; yet cannot we get them to one half hours secret , and sober *Consideration* of their ease . This is the Reason why it is so rare a thing to see men throughly turn to God . This is much of the use of all Gods teachings , and afflictions too but to bring men to sober *Consideration* . God knows that sin hath unmanned us

and lost us the use of our Reason, where we have most use for it : and therefore the means, and Works of God, are to recover us to our *Reason*, and to make us *men* again. The very graces of his Spirit are to make us to be more Reasonable.

And now before I dismiss this Direction, I have a Question, and a Request, to make to thee, whoever thou art, that Readest these lines. My *Question* is this ; *Hast thou ever soberly Considered of thy ways, and laid these greatest matters to heart, or hast thou not?* Dost thou ever use to retire into thy self, and spend any time in this needful work ? If thou dost not, my *Request* to thee is, that now at last thou wouldest do it without delay. Shall I beg this of thee ? shall the Lord that made thee, that bought thee, that preserveth thee, Request this of thee ; that thou wouldest sometimes betake thy self into some secret place, and set thy self purposely to this work of *Consideration*, and follow it earnestly, and close with thy heart, till thou hast made something of it, and brought it to a Resolution ? Wilt thou then spend a little time, in reasoning the case with thy self, and calling thy heart to a strict account, and ask thy self, *What is it that I was made for ? And what business was I sent into the world about ? And how have I dispatcht it ? How have I spent my time, my thoughts, my words ; and how shall I answer for them ? Am I ready to die, if it were this hour ? Am I sure of my Salvation ? Is my soul Converted, and truly Sanctified by the Holy Ghost ? If not, what Reason have I to delay ? Why do I not set about it, and speedily Resolve ? Shall I linger till death come and find me unconverted ? O then what a sad appearance shall I make before the Lord ? And thus follow on the discourse with your hearts ? What say you ? Sirs, Will you here promise me to bestow but some few hours, if it be but on the Lords Day, or when you are private on*

the way, or in your beds, or in your shops, in these *Considerations*? I beseech you, as ever you will do any thing at my Request, deny me not this request. It is nothing that is unreasonab'e. If I desired one of you to spend an hour in talking with me, you would grant it; yea, or if it were to ride, or go for me: And will you not be intreated to spend now and then a little time in *Thinking* of the matters of your own Salvation? Deny not this much to your selves, deny it not to God, if you will deny it me. Should you not bethink you a few hours, of the place, and state that you must live in for ever? Men will build strong where they think to live long: But a tent, or a hut will serve a Souldier for a few nights. O, Sirs, Everlasting is a long day. In the Name of God let not Conscience have such a charge as this against you hereafter; *Thou art come to thy long home, to thy Endless state, before ever thou spentest the space of an hour, in deep and sad, and serious Considerations of it, or in trying thy title to it.* O what a Confounding charge would this be? I am confident I have the witness of your Consciences going along with me, and telling you it is but reasonable, yea, and needful which I say. If yet you will not do it, and I cannot beg one hours sober discourse in secret, between you and your hearts, about these things, then what remedy, but even to leave you to your misery. But I shall tell you in the Conclusion, that I have no hope of that Soul, that will not be perswaded to this duty of *Consideration*: But if I could perswade you to this reasonable, this cheap, this necessary work, and to follow it close, I should have exceeding great hope of the Salvation of you all. I have told you the truth. *Consider what I say, and the Lord give you understanding:* 2 Tim. 2.7. Or if you put me to conclude in harsher terms, they shall be still the Oracles of God. Now Consider this ye that forget God, lest I tell

you in pieces, and there be none to deliver you, Psal. 30. 22.

And so much for the third Direction, about *Consideration*; on which I have staid somewhat long, because I apprehend it of exceeding necessity.

Direct. I V. The fourth Direction which I shall give you, that the work of your Conversion may not miscarry, is this: *See that the work of Humiliation be strongly done, and break not away from the Spirit of Contrition before he have done with you: and yet see that you mistake not the Nature, and the ends of the work, and that you drive it not on further than God requireth you.*

Here I shall first shew you the true Nature of Humiliation: and 2. The use and ends of it; and 3. The mistakes about it, that you must avoid; and 4. I shall press on the Substance of the Direction, and shew you the necessity of it.

1. There is a Preparatory Humiliation that goes before a saving change, which yet is not to be despised, because it is a drawing somewhat nearer unto God, though it be not a faithful closure with him. This Preparatory Humiliation, which many have that perish, doth chiefly consist in these things following. 1. It lieth most in the *Fear* of being damned: As it is most in the Passions, so most in this of *Fear*. 2. It consisteth also in some apprehension of the greatness of our sins, and the wrath of God, that hangs over our heads and the danger that we are in of being damned for ever. 3. It consisteth also in some apprehensions of the folly, that we are guilty of in sinning, and of some *Repentings* that ever we did it, and some remorse of Conscience for it. 4. Hereto may be joyned some Passions of *Sorrow*, and this expressed by *groans* and *tears*. 5. And all this may be accompanied with *Confessions* of sin to God and man, and

Lamentations for our misery, and in some it proceedeth to desperation it self. 6. And lastly it may proceed to an indignation against our selves, and to the taking of a severer revenge on our selves, yea, more than God would have men take ; as *Judas* did by self-destroying. This desperation, and self-execution are no parts of the Preparatory Humiliation ; but the excess, and error of it, and the entrance upon Hell.

2. But there is also a Humiliation that is proper to the Converted, and which accompanieth Salvation ; and this containeth in it, all that is in the former, and much more : Even as the Rational Soul containeth the sensitive, and vigitative, and much more. And this Saving Humiliation consisteth in these following particulars.

1. It beginneth in the Understanding ; 2. It is rooted in the Will ; 3. It worketh in the Affections : and 4. When there is opportunity it sheweth it self in outward expressions, and actions.

1. Humiliation in the Understanding, consisteth in a low esteem of our selves, and in a self-abasing, self-condemning Judgement on our selves ; and that in these Particulars.

1. It consisteth in a deep, and solid apprehension, of the odiousness of our own sins, habitual, and actual, and of our selves for our sins : and that because they are contrary to the blessed Nature and Law of God, and so contrary to our own perfection, and chief Good. 2. It consisteth also in a solid, and fixed apprehension of our own ill-deserving, because of these sins : so that our Judgements do subscribe to the equity of the condemning sentence of the Law ; and we Judge our selves unworthy of the smallest mercy, and worthy of Hell fire. 3. It consisteth in an apprehension of our undone, and miserable Condition in our selves : not only as we are the Heirs of Torment, but as we are void of the Image and Spirit

Spirit of God, and have lost his favour, and are under his displeasure, and enmity by our sin, and have forfeited our part in Everlasting Glory, and how unable we are to help our selves.

And 1. This is in such a measure, that we truly judge our sin, and our selves for sin, to be more odious than any thing else could have made us, and our misery by sin in the foresaid particulars, to be greater than any outward Calamity in the flesh, and than any worldly loss could have procured us. And this we apprehend by a Practical Judgement, and not only by a bare uneffectual speculation. 2. And the spring of this is some Knowledge of God himself, whose Majesty is so Glorious, and whose Wisdom is so Infinite, who is so Good in himself, and unto us, and whose Holy Nature is contrary to sin; and who hath an absolute Propriety in us, and Sovereignty over us. 3. And also it proceedeth from a Knowledge of the true state of mans felicity, which by sin he hath cast away, that it consisteth in the Pleasing and Glorifying, and Enjoying of God, in Loving, and Delighting in him, and Praising him for ever, and having a Nature Perfectly Holy, and fitted hereunto. To see that sin is contray to this Felicity, and hath deprived us of it, is one of the springs of true Humiliation. And 4. It proceedeth also from a Believing Knowledge of Christ Crucified, whom our sins did put to death, who hath declared in the most lively manner to the world by his Cross, and Sufferings, what sin is, and what it hath done, and what a case we had brought our selves into. Thus much of saving Humiliation consisteth in the Understanding.

2. The Principal seat of this Humiliation is in the Will, and there it consisteth in these following Acts, 1. As we think basely of our selves, so the Will hath a fixed *Displacency* against our selves for our sins, and a kind of

Loathing of our selves for all our abominations ; as you may read, *Ezek. 36. 31. & 20. 43. & 6. 9.* An humble sinner is fallen out with himself, and as he is Evil, his heart is against himself.

2. There is also in the Will a *deep Repenting* that ever we sinned, and wronged God, and abused Grace, and have brought our selves to this as we have done ; so that the humbled Soul could wish that he had spent his days in prison, in beggary, or in bodily misery, so that he had not spent them in sin ; and if it were to do again, he would rather choose such a life of shame and calamity in the world, than a life of sin, and would be glad of the exchange.

3. An humbled Soul is truly *willing to grieve* for the sins which he hath committed, and to be as deeply sensible of them, and afflicted for them, as God would have him. Even when he cannot shed a tear, yet his will is to shed them. When he cannot feel any deep afflicting of his Soul for sin, his hearty Desire is, that he might feel it. He doth an hundred times weep in Desire, when he doth it not in Act.

4. An humbled Soul is truly willing to Humble the flesh it self, by the use of those appointed means by which God would have him bring it in subjection ; as by fasting, or abstinence, or mean attire, hard labour, and denying it unnecessary delights. Its a Doubt worth the Considering, whether any such Humbling act must be used, purposely in *Revenge* on cur selves for sin. To which I answer, that we may do nothing in such *Revenge* that God doth not allow, or that makes our body less fit for his service, for that were to be *Revenged* of God, and our Souls ; but those Humbling means which are needful to tame the body, may well be used with this double intention ; first and *chiefly* as a Means for our safety, and duty for the time to come ; that the flesh

flesh may not prevail, and then *collaterally* we should be the more content that the flesh is put to so much suffering, because it hath been and still is so great an enemy to God and us, and the cause of all our sin, and misery ; and this is the *Revenge* that is warrantable in the Penitent, and some think is meant, 2 Cor. 7. 11.

5. As the Humbled Soul hath base thoughts of himself, so he is willing that *others* should esteem and think of him accordingly, even as a vile, unworthy sinner ; so far as his disgrace may be no wrong to the Gospel, or to others, or dishonour to God. His Pride is so far taken down, that he cannot endure to be vilified with some consent ; nor approving of the sin of any man that doth it maliciously, but consenting to the Judgement and Rebukes of those that do it truly, and to the Judgement of God, even by them that do it maliciously. The Humbled Soul doth not stand defending, and unjustly extenuating his Sin, and excusing himself, and swelling against the Reprover : what ever he may do in a temptation, if this temper were predominant, his Pride, and not Humility, must be predominant. But he judgeth himself as much as others can justly judge him, and humbly consenteth to be base in mens eyes, till God shall think it meet to raise him and recover his esteem.

And the Root of all this in the will, is, 1. A Love to God whom we have offended. 2. A hatred of sin that hath offended him, and that hath made us vile. And 3. A believing sense of the Love, and Sufferings of Christ, that in his flesh hath condemned sin, (Rom. 8. 2, 3.) And thus you see what Humiliation is in the Will, which is the very Life and Soul of true Humiliation.

3. Humiliation also consisteth in the Affections : in an unfeigned sorrow for the sin which we have committed, and the corruption that is in us ; and a *shame* for these sins ; and an holy fear of God whom we have offended,

offended, and of his Judgements which we have deserved ; and an hatred of our sins by which we have deserved them, But (as I must further shew you anon) it is not the measure, but the sincerity of these Passions, by which you must make a Judgement of your state ; and that will be hardly discerned by the Passions themselves, but only by so much of the Will as is in them ; and therefore the Will is the safest to Judge by.

4. Humiliation also consisteth expressively in the outward action, when opportunity is offered ; and it is not true in the Heart, if it refuse to appear without, when God requireth it in your ordinary course, The outward acts of Humiliation are these : 1. A voluntary Confession of sin to God, and to men, when God requireth it, and that is, when it is necessary to his Honour, to the healing of them that we have endangered, and satisfying the offended : at least in the hearing of men, in such cases as these to confess them openly to God ; an unhumbled Soul will refuse this for the shame ; but the Humble will freely take shame to themselves, and warn their brethren, and justify God, and give him the Glory, *1 John 1. 9. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us : read Mark 3. 6. Levit. 5. 5, & 16. 21, & 26. 40. Numb. 5. 6, 7. James 5. 16. Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed, Prov. 28. 13. He that hideth his sins shall not prosper : but who confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy.* Not that any man is to confess his secret sins to others, except in case that he cannot otherwise find relief : nor that a man is to publish those offences of his own, by which he may further dis honour God, and hinder the Gospel : but when the sin is open already, and specially when the offence of others, *ie* hardening of the wicked, the satisfaction of the Church concerning our Repentance, do require our Confession,

Confession, and open Lamentation ; the Humble Soul both must and will submit to it : but the rotten-hearted, unhumbled Hypocrite will *Confess* but in these cases ; 1. When the *secrecie* of the confession, or the *smallness* of the fault, or the *customariness* of such Confessing, doth make it to be a matter of no great disgrace. 2. Or when it is so open, that it is in vain to attempt to hide it, and his Confession will do nothing to *increase* the disgrace. 3. Or when Conscience is awakened, or they see they must die, or are forced by some terrible Judgement of God ; In all these cases the wicked may Confess. And so *Judas* will Confess, *I have sinned in betraying the innocent blood* ; And *Pharaoh* will Confess, *I and my people have sinned*. And a Thief on the Gallows will Confess : and the vilest wretches on their death-bed will Confess : But we have more death-bed Confessions, than voluntary Confessions before the Church. Nay so far hath Pride and Hypocrisie prevailed, and the ancient discipline of the Church been neglected, that I think in most Countries in *England*, there are many more that make Confessions on the Gallows, than personally in the Congregation.

2. Humiliation must be also expressed, by all those external means, and signs which God by Scripture, or Nature calleth us to, As by *tears*, and groans, so far as we can seasonably procure them. And by *Fasting*, and laying by our worldly pomp and bravery, and using mean (though decent) attire ; and by condescending to men of the lower sort, and stooping to the meanest : By humble Language, and Carriage ; and by forgiving others, on this account, that we are sensible of the greatness of our Debts to God. And thus I have briefly shewed you the true Nature of Humiliation, that you may know what it is that I am perswading you to, and which you must submit your hearts unto,

II. When I have told you the Use and Ends of Humiliation, you will see more of the Reason of its Necessity to your selves. And first, it is one Use of Humiliation, to help on the Mortification of the flesh, or *Carnal-self*, and to annihilate it as it is the Idol of the Soul. The nature of mans sinful, and miserable estate, is, that he is fallen from *God to Himself*; and liveth now to *Himself*, studying, and loving, and pleasing *Himself*, his *Natural self*, above God. And a sinner will let go many outward sins, and be driven from the out-works, before he will let go *Carnal self*, and be driven from the Castle and strength of sin. There is no part of Mortification so Necessary, and so Hard as *Self-denial*: Indeed this doth virtually comprehend all the rest, and if this be done, all's done. If it were but his Friend, his Superfluities, his House, his Lands, perhaps a Carnal heart might part with it: But to part with his life, his *All, his Self*, this is a hard saying to him, and enough to make him go away sorrowful, as *Luke 18. 22, 23, 24*. And therefore here appeareth the Necessity of Humiliation: This layeth all the *Load on Self*, and breaketh the heart of the old man, and maketh a man loath *himself*, that formerly doted on *himself*. It layeth this Tower of *Babel* in the dust, and maketh us abhor *our selves* in dust and ashes: It setteth the house on fire about our ears, which we both Trusted and Delighted in. And makes us not only see, but feel, that it's time for us to be gone. Pride is the Master Vice in the unsanctified, and its the part of Humiliation to cast it down. *Self-seeking* is the busines of their Lives, till Humiliation help to turn the stream; And then if you did but see their thoughts, you should see them think most vilely of *themselves*: And if you do but over-hear their Prayers, or Complaints,

you

you shall hear them still cry out upon *themselves*, and beg help against *themselves*, as their greatest Enemies.

2. The next Use of Humiliation (and implied in this) is, to Mortifie those sins, which *Carnal-self* doth live upon, and is maintained by ; and to stop all the avenues, or passages of its provision. Sin is *sweet* and *dear* to all that are unsanctified ; But Humiliation makes it bitter and base. (As the *Indians* cured the *Spanish Captain* of his Thirst after Gold, by pouring melted Gold down his throat ; or as Children are perswaded from playing with a Bee-hive, when they are once or twice stung by them ; or from playing with snappish dogs, when they are bitten by them : So God will teach his Children to know what it is to play with sin, when they have smarted by it. They will know a nettle from a harmless herb, when they feel the sting ; we are so apt to live by sense, that God seeth it needful, that our Faith have something of sense to help it. When the Conscience doth accuse, and the heart is smarting, and groaning in pain, and we feel that no shifting, or striving will deliver us, then we begin to be wiser than before, and to know what sin is, and what it will do for us. When that which was our delight, is become our burden, and a burden too heavy for us to bear, it cureth our delighting in it. When *David* was watering his couch with his tears, and made them his drink, his sin was not the same thing to him, as it was in the committing. Humiliation washeth away the painting of this Harlot, and sheweth her in her deformity. It unmasketh sin, which had got the vizard of Virtue, or of a small matter, or harmless thing. It unmasketh Satan, who was transformed into a Friend, or an Angel of light, and sheweth him, as we say, with his cloven feet and horns. How hard is it to cure a worldling of the love of money ? But when God hath laid such a load of it on his Conscience, that makes

makes him groan, and cry for help, he hath then enough of it : When he feels those words in *Jam. 5. 1, 2, 3, 4.* And he begins to weep, and howl for the Miseries that are coming on him, and he feels the stink of his corrupted Riches, and the Canker of his Gold and Silver do begin to eat his flesh as fire, and his Idol is but a witness against him, then he is better able to judge of it, than he was before. The wanton thinks he hath a happy life, when the Harlots lips do drop as the hony-comb : But when he perceiveth her end is bitter as wormwood, and sharp as a two-edged sword, and that her feet go down to death, and her steps take hold on Hell, and he lyeth in sorrow complaining of his folly. *Prov. 5. 3, 4, 5, 11, 12.* he is then of a more rectified judgement than he was. *Manasseh* humbled in irons, is not the same as he was upon the Throne : Though Grace did more to it than his fetters, yet were they some way serviceable to that end. Humiliation openeth the door of the heart, and telleth you what sin is to the quick ; and letteth in the words of life, which passed no further than the ear or brain. It is a tiring work to talk to dead men, that have lost their feeling ; especially when it is an affective and practical doctrine, which we must deliver to them, which is lost if it be not felt and practised : Till Humiliation comes, we speak to dead men, or at least to men that are fast asleep, How many Sermons have I heard that one would think, should have turned mens hearts within them, and made them cry out against their sins, with sorrow and shame in the face of the Congregation, and never meddle with them more ! When yet the hearts have scarce been moved by them, but gone away as they came, as if they knew not what the Preacher said because their hearts were all the while asleep within them. But a Humbled Soul, is an awakened Soul : I will regard what is said to it : especially when they per-

ceive that it cometh from the Lord, and concerneth their Salvation. It is a great encouragement to us, to speak to a man that hath ears, and life, and feeling ; that will meet the word with an appetite, and take it with some relish, and let down the food that is put into their mouths. The will is the chiefest sort of sin. If we can there get in upon it, we may do something : But if it keep the heart, and we can get no nearer it than the ear or brain, there will no good be done. Now Humiliation openeth us a passage to the heart, that we may assault sin in its strength. When I tell you of the abominable nature of sin, that caused the death of Christ, and causeth Hell, and tell you that it is better to run into the fire, than to commit the least sin wilfully ; though it be such as the world makes nothing of ; another man may hear all this, and superficially believe it, and it is true : but it is the humbled Soul that *feeleth* what I say. What a stir have we with a drunkard, or worldling, or any other sensual sinner, in perswading him to cast away his sins with detestation : and all to little purpose ! sometime he will, and sometime he must needs be tasting them again ; and thus he stands dallying, because the word hath not mastered his heart. But when God comes in upon the Soul as with a tempest, and throweth open the doors, and as it were thundereth, and lighteneth in the Conscience, and layeth hold upon the sinner, and shaketh him all in pieces by his terrors, and asketh him, *Is sinning good for thee ? Is a fleshly careless life so good ? Thou wretched worm : Thou foolish piece of clay : Darest thou thus abuse me to my face ? Dost thou not know that I look on ? Is this the work that I made thee for, and that I feed and preserve thee, and continue thee alive for ? Away with thy sin, without any more ado, or I will have thy soul away, and deliver thee to the tormentors.* This wakeneth him out of his dalliance and delaies ; and

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and makes him see that God is in good earnest with him, and therefore he must be so with God. If a Physcion have a patient that is addicted to his appetite, who hath the Gout, or Stone, or other disease, and he forbid him wine, or strong drink, or such meats as he desirereth ; as long as he feels himself at ease, he will be venturing on them, and will not be curbed by the words of the Physcion : but when the fit is on him, and he feels the torment, then he will be ruled : pain will teach him more effectually than words could do. When he *feeleth* what is hurtful to him, and *feeleth* that it alway makes him sick, it will restrain him more than *hearing* of it could do. So when Humiliation doth break your hearts, and make you feel that you are sick of sin, and filleth your soul with smart and sorrow, then you will be the more willing that God should destroy it in you. When it lyeth so heavy on you, that you are unable to look up, and makes you go to God with groans and tears, and cry, *O Lord be merciful to me a sinner* : when you are fain to go to Ministers for ease to your Consciences, and fill their ears with accusations of your selves, and open even your odious shameful sins, then you will be content to let them go. Now there is no talking to you of Mortification, and the resolute rejecting of your sins : the Precepts of the Gospel are too strict for you to submit to. But a broken heart would change your minds. The healthful Plow-man faith, *Give me that which I love : these Physicians would bring us all to their Rules, that they may get money by us ; I never mean to follow their Directions* : but when sicknes is upon him, and he hath tryed all his own skill in vain, and pain giveth him no rest, then send for the Physcion : and then he will do any thing, and take any thing whatever he will give him, so that he may but be eased and recovered. So when your hearts are whole and unhumbled, these

Preachers

Preachers and Scriptures are too strict for you : you must have that which you love : self-conceited precise Ministers must have leave to talk ; but you will never believe that God is of their mind, or will damn men for taking that which they have a mind of. O but when these sins are as swords in your hearts, and you begin to feel what Ministers told you of, then you will be of another mind : away then with this sin : there is nothing so odious, so hurtful, so intolerable. O that you could be rid of it, whatever it cost you ! Then he will be your best Friend that can tell you how to kill it, and be free from it ; and he that would draw you to it, would be as Satan himself to you ; *Matth. 16. 22, 23. Gal. 1. 8, 9.* Humiliation diggeth so deep, that it undermineth sin, and the fortresses of the Devil ; and when the foundation is rooted up, it will soon be overthrown. When the Murderers of Christ were pricked to the heart, they then cry out for counsel to the Apostles, *Acts 2. 37.* When a murderer of the Saints is stricken blind-fold to the earth, and the Spirit withall doth humble his soul, he will then cry out, *Lord what wouldst thou have me to do ?* *Acts 9. 6.* When a cruel Jaylour that scourged the servants of Christ is by an Earth-quake brought to a heart-quake, he will then cry out, *What shall I do to be saved ?* *Acts 16. 30.*

And here comes in the usefulness of *Afflictions* ; even because they are so great advantages to Humiliation. Men will be brought to some *Reason* by extremities. When they lie a dying, a man may talk to them, and they will not so proudly fly in his face, nor make a scorn of the word of the Lord, as in their prosperity they did. God will be more regarded when he pleadeth with them with the rod in his hand : stripes are the best Logick and Rhetorick for a fool. When sin hath captivated their Reason to their flesh, the Arguments to convince them

them must be such, as the flesh is capable of perceiving. We may long tell a beast of dangers and discommodities, before we can perswade him from that which he loves. Sensuality doth brutifie men in too great a measure ! and so far as they are brutish, it is not the clearest Reasons that will prevail ; and if God did not maintain in corrupted man some remnants of free Reason, we might preach to beasts as hopefully as to men. But *Afflictions* tend to weaken the Enemy that doth captivate them ; as prosperity by accident tends to strengthen him. The flesh understandeth the language of the Rod, better than the language of Reason, or of the Word of God.

And as the sensible part of our Humiliation promoteth Mortification ; so the rational and voluntary Humiliation, which is proper to the Sanctified, is a principal part of Mortification it self. And thus you may see that its necessary that we be thoroughly humbled, that sin may be thoroughly killed in us.

3. Another use of Humiliation is, to fit the Soul for a meet entertainment of further Grace, and that both for the honour of Christ and Grace, and for our own welfare.

1. In respect of Christ, it is equal that he should dwell in such souls only as are fit to entertain him. Neither his person, nor his busines, are such as can suite with the unhumbled heart. Till Humiliation make a sinner feel his sin and misery, it is not possible that Christ as Christ should be heartily welcome to him, or received in that sort as his honour doth expect : who cares for the Physcion that feels no sickness, and fears not death ? He may pass by the doors of such a man, and he will not call him in : but when pain and fears of death are on him, he will send, and seek, and bid him welcome. Will any man fly to Christ for succour that feeleth not his wants, and danger ? will they lay hold on him,

him, as the only refuge of their souls, and cleave to him as their only hope that feel no great need of him? Will they lie at his feet, and beg for mercy, that feel themselves well enough without him? When men do but hear of sin and misery, and superficially believe it, they may coldly look after Christ, and Grace; and feel the worth of the latter, in such a manner as they feel the weight of the former. But never is Christ valued and sought after as Christ, till sorrow have taught us how to value him: nor is he entertained in the necessary honour of a Redeemer, till Humiliation throw open all the doors; no man can seek him with his *whole* heart, that seeks him not with a *broken* heart.

And its certain that Christ will come on no lower terms into the soul. Though he come to do us good, yet he will have the honour of doing it; though he come to heal us, and not for any need he hath of us, yet he will have the welcome that's due to a Physician. He comes to save us, but he will be honoured in our salvation. He inviteth all to the marriage Supper, and even compelleth them to come in: but he expecteth that they bring a wedding garment, and come not in a garb that will dishonour his house. Though his Grace be free, yet he will not expose it to contempt, but will have the fulness & freeness of it glorified. Though he came not to Redeem himself but us, yet he came to be Glorified in the work of our Redemption. He hath no Grace so free, as to save them that will not esteem it: and give him thanks for it. And therefore though faith is enough to accept the gift, yet must it be a thankfull faith, that will magnifie the giver, and an humble faith that will feel the worth of it, and an obediential faith that will answer the ends of it. And therefore that faith which is the condition of our Justification, is fitted as well to the honour of the giver, as the commodity of the receiver. And as Reason telleth

us that it should be so, so Christian ingenuity consenteth that it be so. The Soul that is truly united to Christ, and partaketh of his nature doth think its own Receiving greatest, where the honour of Christ is greatest; and it cannot take pleasure in the thoughts of such a kind of Grace as should dishonour the Lord of Grace himself. As Christ is solicitous for the saving of the Soul, so he makes the Soul solicitous of the right entertainment of him that saveth it. And therefore through his Blood, and not his Teaching or his Government was the Ransom of our souls; yet he is resolved to Justifie none by his Blood, but on the Condition of that Faith, which is an hearty consent to his Teaching and Dominion. It is not in the Application, or bestowing of Christs benefits, as it was in the purchasing of them. When he came to Ransom us, he consented to be a Sufferer, and gave his cheeks to the smiter, and submitted to reproach; he endured the Cross, despising the shame, and being reviled, he reviled not, but prayed for his persecutors; but when he comes by his saving Grace into the Soul, he will not there be entertained with contempt; for in the flesh he came on purpose to be humbled; but in the Spirit he comes to be exalted: in the flesh he came to condemn the sin that reigned in our flesh, (*Rom. 8. 3.*) and so was made sin for us (that is, a Sacrifice for sin) (*2 Cor. 5. 21.*) But in the Spirit he comes to conquer our flesh, and by the Law of his quickning Spirit, to free us from the Law of sin and death; both that the Righteousness of the Law might be fulfilled in us, and also that there might be no Condemnation to us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. *Rom. 8. 1, 2, 4.* The Kingdom of Christ was not worldly; for if it had been worldly, he would have sought to establish it by strength of arms, and fighting, which are worldly means, *Job. 18. 36.*

But

But his Kingdom is within us: It is a Spiritual Kingdom; and therefore though in the world he was used with contempt, as a fool, and as a Sinner, and a man of sorrows; yet *within* us he will be used with honour, and reverence, as a King and absolute Lord. It was the hour of the executioner, and the power of darkness, when he was in his suffering; but it is the hour of his triumph, and marriage, and the prevailing Power of the Heavenly Light, when he cometh by Saving Grace into the Soul. On the Cross he was *as* a sinner, and stood in *our* place, and bore what was *our* due, and not his own. But in the Soul he is the Conquerour of sin, and cometh to take possession of his own and doth the work that belongeth to him in his dignity; and therefore he will *there* be acknowledged, and honoured. On the Cross he was pulling down the Kingdom of Satan, and setting up his own, but in the preparatory purchase: But in the Soul he doth both by immediate execution. On the Cross sin and Satan had their full blow at *him*: But when he entreth the Soul, he hath his blow at them, and ceaseth not till he have destroyed them. In *purchasing* he expended his own: But in *Converting* he takes possession of that which he purchased. In a word, he came into the world in flesh for his undertaken Humiliation: but he comes into the Soul, by his Spirit, for his deserved exaltation: And therefore though he endured to be spit upon in the flesh, he will not endure to be slighted in the Soul: And as in the world he was scorned with the Title of a King, and crowned with thorns, and cloathed in such Kingly robes, as might make him the fitter object for their reproach: So when his Spirit entreth into the Soul, he will be there enthroned in our most reverent, subjective, and deepest esteem, and crowned with our highest Love, and Thankfulness, and bowed to with the tenders of Obedience, and our praise.

the Cross shall there be the portion of his enemies, and the Crown and Scepter shall be his, and as all were preferred before him on Earth, even *Barrabas* himself; so all things shall be put under him in the Sanctified Soul, and he shall be preferred before all.

This is the end of Humiliation, to make ready the heart for a fuller entertainment of the Lord that bought it; and to prepare the way before him, and fit the Soul to be the Temple of his Spirit. An humbled Soul would never have put him off with excuses from *Oxen*, and *Farms*, and *Wifes*; As *Luke* 14. and *Matth.* 22. But the unhumbled will make light of him.

And 2. As Christ himself will be honourably received, or not at all, so must the Mercies, and Graces which he offerreth. He will not apply his blood, and righteousness to them that care not for it; He will not pardon such a mass of iniquity, and remove such mountains as lie upon the Soul, for them that feel not the Necessity of such a Mercy. He will not take men from the power of the Devil, and the drudgery of sin, and the suburbs of Hell, and make them his Members, and the Sons of God, and the Heirs of Heaven, that have not learn't the value of these benefits, but set more by their very sin, and misery, and the trifles of the world. Christ doth not despise his Blood, his Spirit, his Covenant, his Pardon, nor his Heavenly Inheritance; and therefore he will give them to none that do despise them, till he teacheth them better to know their worth. Do you think it would stand with the Wisdom of Christ, to give such unspeakable blessings as these, to men that have not hearts to value them? Why, it is more to give a man Justification, and Adoption, than to give him all this visible world; the Sun, the Moon, the Firmament, and the Earth. And should these be given to one that cares not for them? Why by this means God should

should miss of his ends : He should not have the Love, the Honour, or the thanks that he intended by his gift. It is necessary therefore that the Soul be throughly humbled, that pardon may be received as pardon, and Grace as Grace, and not set light by.

And 3. As this is necessary for the honour both of Christ and Grace, so also it is necessary for our own benefit and consolation. The Mercy cannot indeed be ours, if Humiliation do not make us capable of it. (These Cordials must be taken into an empty Stomach, and not be drowned in flegm and filth.) A man on the Gallows will be glad of a pardon : but a stander by that thinks he is innocent, would not regard it, but take it for an accusation. There is no great sweetnes in the name of a Redeemer, to an unhumbled Soul. It sets not by the Spirit : the Gospel is no Gospel to it, the tidings of salvation are not so glad to such a one, as the tidings of riches or worldly delights would be. As it is the preparation of the Stomach that maketh our meat sweet to us ; and the coorsest fare is pleasanter to the sound, than sweet-meats to the sick : so if we were not emptied of our selves, and vile and lost in our own apprehensions, and if Contrition did not quicken our appetites, the Lord himself, and all the miracles of his Saving Grace, would be but as a thing of nought in our eyes ; and we should be but weary to hear or think of them. But O what an unestimable Treasure is Christ to the Humbled Soul. What life is in his promises ? What sweetnes in every passage of his grace ; and what a feast in his unmeasurable Love ?

4. Another Use of Humiliation, implied in the former, is, that it is necessary to bring men to yield to the terms of the Covenant of Grace : Nature holds fast it's fleshly pleasures, and lives by feeling and upon present things, and knows not how to live upon invisibles,

by a life of Faith. And this is the life that all must live, that will live in Christ: And therefore he calleth them to the forsaking of *all*: the crucifying the world and flesh, the denying of themselves, if they will be his Disciples. But O how loth is nature to part with all, and make a full resignation unto Christ! but fain it would make sure of present things, for fear lest the promise of Heaven should but deceive them, and then they would have Heaven at last as a reserve. And on these terms it is that Hypocrites are Religious, and thus it is that they deceive their Souls. But when the heart is truly *broken*, it will then stand no longer on such terms with Christ, but yield up *all*. It will then no longer *Condition* with *him*, but stand to *his Conditions*, and thankfully accept them. Any thing will then serve, with Christ, and Grace, and the hopes of Glory.

5. Another Use of Humiliation is, to fit us for the Retaining and Improving of Grace, when we have received it. The Proverb is, *Lightly come, Lightly go*. If God should give the pardon of sin to the unhumbl'd, how soon would it be cast away? And how easily would such be hearkening to temptation, and returning to their vomit? The burn't Child, we say, dreads the fire. When sin hath killed you once, and broken your hearts, you will think the worse of it while you live. And when a temptation comes, you will think of your former smart: *Is not this it that cost me so many groans, and laid me in the dust, and had almost damned me? and shall I go to it again? Was I so bardly recovered, by a Miracle of Mercy? And shall I run again into the misery that I was saved from? Had I not sorrow, and fear, and care enough, but I must go back again for more, and renew my trouble?* Thus the remembrance of your sorrows, will be a continual preservative to you. And a contrite spirit that is emptied of it self, and is taught the worth of Christ

Christ and mercy, will not only hold them fast, but will know how to use them, in thankfulness to God, and benefit to himself.

6. Another Use of Humiliation, is to fit the Soul for its approach to God himself, from whom it had revolted. As it beseems not any creature, to approach the God of Heaven, but in *Reverential* humility: so it beseems not any sinner to approach him, but in *Contrite* Humility. Who can come out of such wickedness and misery; and not bring along the sense of it on his heart? It befeemeth not a Prodigal to meet his Father as confidently and boldly, as if he had never departed from him; but to say, *Father I have sinned against Heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy son*, Luke 15. 18. It is not ingenuous for a guilty Soul, or one that is snatched as a brand out of the fire, to look towards God with a brazen face, but with shame and sorrow to hang down the head, and smite upon the brest, and say, *O Lord be merciful to me a sinner. For God resisteth the proud, but giveth Grace to the humble*: 1 Pet. 5. 5. Jam. 4. 6. *Though the Lord be high, yet he bath regard unto the lowly: but the proud he knoweth afar off*, Psal. 138. 6. *For thus saith the High and Holy one that inhabiteth Eternity, whose Name is Holy; and I dwell in the High and Holy Place; with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones*, Isa. 57. 15. *To this man will I look, even to him that is poor, and of a contrite spirit, and that trembles at my Word*, Isa. 66. 2. *The Lord is nigh to them that are of a broken heart, and saveth such as be of a contrite spirit*, Psal. 34. 18. *The Sacrifices of God are a broken spirit: a broken and contrite heart, O God thou wilt not despise*, Psal. 51. 17. *There is no turning to God, unless we loath our selves for all our abominations*, Ezek. 16. 63.

The nearer we approach him , the more we must abhor our selves in dust and ashes , Job 42. 6. He will not embrace a sinner in his dung ; but will first wash and cleanse him , Isa. 1. 16. Conversion must make us humble , and as little Children , that are teachable , and look not after great matters in the world , or else there is no entering the Kingdom of God , Matth. 18. 3, 4. And thus you see the Uses and Necessity of Humiliation.

III. By what hath been already said , you may perceive what mistakes are carefully to be avoided , about your Humiliation , and with what caution it must be sought ,

1. One Error that you must take heed of , is , *That you take not Humiliation for an indifferent thing* , or for such an appurtenance of Faith as may be spared : think not an unhumbled soul while such can be sanctified. Some carnal hearts conceive , that it is only more hainous sinners that must be contrite and broken-hearted ; and that this is not necessary to them that have been brought up civilly or religiously from their youth. But it is as possible to be saved without Faith , as without Repentance , and that special Humiliation , which I described to you before. Its part of your Sanctification ,

2. Another mistake to be carefully avoided , is , *The placing of your Humiliation , either only , or principally , in the Passionate part , or in the outward expression of those passions*. I mean , either in pinching grief , and sorrow of heart , or else in tears. But you must remember that the Life of it is , as was said before , in the Judgement and the Will. It is not the measure of passionate sorrow and anguish , that will best shew the measure of your sincere Humiliation : much less is it your tears

tears or outward expressions. But it is your low esteem of your selves, and contentedness to be vile in the eyes of others: and your displacency with your selves, and willingness to mourn and weep for sin as much as God would have you: with the rest of the acts of the Judgment and Will before described.

Two great dangers are here before you to be avoided. First, some there be that have terrible pangs of sorrow, and are ready to tear their own hair, yea or make away themselves as *Judas*, in the horror of their Consciences: and these may seem to have true Humiliation, and yet have none. And some can weep abundantly at a Sermon or in a prayer, or in mentioning their sin to others: and therefore think that they are truly humbled: and yet it may be nothing so. For if at the same time their hearts are in love with sin, or had rather keep it than let it go, or have not an habitual hatred to it, and a predominant superlative Love to God, their Humiliation is no saving work. That which is in the Passions and tears, may be even forced against your wills: and it signifieth scarce so much as a common Grace, where you are not willing of it. Many an one can weep through a passionate, womanish, tender nature, and yet not only remain unhumbled, but be proud in a very high degree. How many such do we ordinarily see! especially women that can weep more at a duty or conference, than some that are truly broken-hearted could do in all their lives: and yet be so far from being vile in their own eyes, and willing to be so in the eyes of others, that they will hate, and reproach, and rail at those that charge them with the faults which they seemed to lament; or at least that charge them with disgraceful sins; and they will excuse and mince their sins, and make a small matter of them, and love none so well as those that have the highest thoughts of them. So that Pride doth ordinarily reign

in their hearts, and break out in their works and lives, and make them hate the faithfulest reprovers, and live in contention with any that dishonour them, for all the tears that come from their eyes. Judge not therefore by passions, or tears alone, but by the Judgement and the Will, as is aforesaid.

2. Another sort there are much better and happier than the former, that yet to their great trouble are mistaken in this point: and that is, they that think they have no true Humiliation, because they find not such pangs of sorrow, and freedom of tears, as others have: when as their hearts are contrite, even when they cannot weep a tear. Tell me but this; are you vile in your own eyes, because you are guilty of sin, and that against the Lord whom you chiefly love? Do you loath your sins, because of your abominations, and could you heartily wish, that you had been suffering when you were sinning; and if it were to do again, would you choose to suffer rather than to sin? Have you a desire to grieve, when you cannot passionately grieve, and a desire to weep when you cannot weep? Can you quietly bear it, when you are vilified by others, because you know your selves to be so vile? And are you thankful to a plain Reprover, though he tell you of the most disgraceful sin? do you think meanly of your own sayings and doings, and think better of others, where there is any ground, than of your selves? Do you justifie Gods afflictions, and mens true rebukes, and think your selves unworthy of the Communion of the Saints, or to see their faces, and unworthy to live on the face of the earth? Yea would you justifie God, if he should condemn you? This is the state of an humbled Soul. Find but this, and you need not doubt of Gods acceptance, though you were unable to shed a tear. There is more Humiliation in a base esteem of our selves, than in a thousand tears, and more

more in a will, or desire to weep for sin, than in tears, that come through force of terror, or moisture of the brain, or passionate tenderness of Nature. If the Will be right you need not fear. It is he that most hateth sin, and is hardlyest drawn to it, that is truliest humbled for it. He that will lament it to day, and commit it to morrow, is far less humbled and penitent, than he that would not be drawn to it with the hopes of all the pleasures of the world, nor commit it, if it were to save his life.

3. To avoid this, some run into the contrary mistake, and think that *sorrow* and *tears* are unnecessary, and that they may Repent as well without them as with them; and they lay all in some dull uneffectual wishes; and so they think the Heart is changed. But certainly God made not the Affections in vain. It cannot be that any man can have a Sanctified Will, but his Affections will hold some correspondence with it, and be commanded by it. Though we cannot mourn in that Measure as we desire, yet some sorrow there will be whereever the Heart is truly changed. And *appretiatiō*: this sorrow will be the greatest. No man can heartily believe that sin is the greatest evil to his Soul, and not be grieved for it. And indeed our Liveliest Affections should be exercised about these weightiest things. It is a shame to see a man mourn for a friend, and whine under a Cross that toucheth but the flesh, and yet be so insensible of the plague of sin, and the anger of the Lord, and to laugh and jest with such mountains on his Soul. Though grief and tears be not the heart, or principal part of our Humiliation, yet are they to be lookest after as our duty; yea sorrow in some measure is of absolute necessity: and the want of tears is no good sign in them that have tears for other things. Indeed the sense of our folly and unkindness should be so great, that it should even

turn

turn our hearts into sorrow, and melt them in our breasts and draw forth streams of tears from our eyes: and if we cannot bring our selves to this, we must yet lament the hardness of our hearts, and not excuse it.

4. In the next place you are hence informed, how to answer that Question, *Whether it be possible for a man to be humbled, and repent too much.* That part of Humiliation which consisteth in the acts of the Understanding and the will, *cannot* be too much as to the *Intention* of the *Act*; And if it be too much as to the *Objective extent*, then as it is misguided, so it changeth its Nature, and ceaseth to be the thing that it was before. A man may think worse of himself than he is, by thinking falsely of himself, as that he is guilty of the sin which he is not guilty of; But this is not the same thing with true Humiliation. But to have too clear an apprehension of the evil of his sin, and his own vileness, this he need not fear. And in the will it is more clear; No man can be too willing to be rid of sin, in Gods time and way; nor be too much averse from it, as it is against the Lord. But then the other part of Humiliation, which consisteth in the depth of sorrow, or in tears, *may* possibly be too much; Though I know very few that are guilty of it, or need to fear it; because the common case of the world is to be stupid, and hard-hearted; and most of the Godly are lamentably insensible. But yet some few there are, that have need of this advice, that they strive not for too great a measure of grief. Let your hearts be against sin as much as is possible; But yet let there be some limits in your grief and tears. And this counsel is necessary to these sorts of people.

1. To Melancholy people, that are in danger of being distracted, and made unreasonable, and useless by overmuch sorrow. Their thoughts will be fixing, and musing, and sad, and dark, and full of fears, and either make things worse than

than they are, or else be deeplyer affected with them than their heads can bear. 2. And this is the Case of some weak-spirited women, that are not Melancholy; but yet by natural weakness of their brains, and strength of their passions, are unable to endure those serious deep affecting apprehensions which others may desire; but the depth of their sensibility, and greatness of their passion, doth presently endanger the crazing of their brains, and quickly cast them into Melancholy; or worse.

And this is a very heavy affliction where it comes, both to the persons themselves, and those about them. To be deprived of the Use of Reason, is one of the greatest corporal calamities in this life. And it is matter of offence, and dishonour to the Gospel in the eyes of the ungodly, that understand not the Case. When they see any languish in unmeasurable sorrow, or fall into distraction, it is a grievous temptation to them, to fly from Religion, and avoid godly sorrow, and all serious thoughts of heavenly things, and it occasioneth the foolish scorners to say, that Religion makes men mad; and that this Humiliation and Conversion which we call them to, is the way to bring them out of their wits. So that by reason of the grief of the godly, and the hardening of the ungodly, the Case is so sad, that it requireth our greatest care to avoid it.

Quest. But if it be so dangerous to sorrow, either too little, or too much, what shall a poor sinner do in such a strait? And how shall he know when to restrain his sorrow?

Answ. It is but very few in the world, that have cause to fear excess of his kind of sorrow. The common Case of men, is to be blockish, and worldly sorrow doth cast more into Melancholy, and distractions than godly sorrow: But for those few that are in danger of excess, I shall first tell you how to discern it, and then how to remedy it.

1. When your sorrow is greater than your brains can bear, without apparent danger of destruction, or a Melancholy disturbance and diminution of your Understanding, then it is certainly too much, and to be restrained. For if you overthrow your Reason, you will be a reproach to Religion, and you will be fit for nothing that's truly good, either to your own Edification, or the Service of God.

2. If you be in any grievous disease, which sorrow would increase to the hazard of your life, you have reason to restrain it: Though you may not forbear Repenting, or Carefulness of your Salvation, yet the Passion of grief you must moderate and abate.

3. When sorrow is so great as to discompose your mind, or enfeeble your body, so as to un-fit you for the service of God, and make you more unable to do good, or receive good, you have reason then to moderate and restrain it.

4. When the greatness of your sorrow doth overmatch the necessary measure of your Love, or Joy, or Thanks, and keep out these, and takes up more of your spirit than its part, having no room for greater duties, then it is excessive and to be restrained. There are some that will strive and struggle with their hearts, to wring out a few tears, and increase their sorrow, that yet make little Conscience of other affections, and will not strive half so much to increase their Faith and Love, and Joy.

5. When your sorrow by the greatness of it, doth draw you into temptation, either to despair, or think hardly of God and his Service, or to undervalue his Grace, and the Satisfaction of Christ, as if it were too scant, and insufficient for you, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it.

6. When your sorrow is unseasonable, and will needs thrust

thrust in at those times when you are called to Thankfulness, and Joy, you have then cause to moderate and restrain it at that season. Not that we should *wholly* lay by sorrow in any day of Joy and Thanksgiving, unless we could lay by all our sin in the duties of that day : Nor should we *wholly* lay by Spiritual comfort and delight, in days of greatest Humiliation. For as our state is here mixt, of Grace and sin, so must all our duties be mixt of Joy and Sorrow : It is only in Heaven where we must have unmixed Joys, and only in Hell that there are unmixed sorrows ; or at least, not in any state of Grace. But yet for all that there are seasons now, when one of these must be more eminently exercised, and the other in a lower measure. As in times of Calamity, and after a fall we are called out so much to Humiliation, that Comfort should but moderate our sorrows, and the exercise of it be veiled for that time : so in times of Special Mercies from the Lord, we may be called out to exercise our thanks, and Praise, and Joy so eminently, that sorrow should but keep us humble, and be as it were, serviceable to our Joys. When Grace and Mercy is most eminent, then Joy and Praise should be predominant (which is through the most of a Christians life, that walketh uprightly and carefully with God :) And when sin and Judgements are most eminent, sorrow must be then predominant, as being a necessary means to solid Joy. And therefore ordinarily a sinner that is but in the work of Conversion, and newly coming to God from a rebellious state, must entertain more sorrow, and let out himself more to groans and tears than afterward, when he is brought to Reconciliation with God, and walketh in integrity.

Quest. But when is it that my sorrow is too short, and I should labour to increase it ?

Answ. 1. When there is no apparent danger of the last-

last-mentioned evils, that is, Of destroying your bodies, distracting your brains, discomposing your minds, and drowning other Graces and duties, and the rest; then you have little cause to be afraid of an excess.

2. When you have not smart enough to cause you to value the Love of Christ, and highly prize his blood, and the effects of it, and hunger and thirst after him and his righteousness, and earnestly beg for the pardon of your sin; you have cause to desire then more sorrow; If you feel no great need of Christ, but pass by him as lightly as the full stomach by his food, as if you could do well enough without him; you may be sure then you have need to be broken more. If you set not so much by the Love of God, that you would part with any thing in the world to enjoy it, and would think no terms too dear for heaven: You have need to lie under the fence of your sin and misery a little longer, and to beseech the Lord to save you from that heart of stone. When you can hear of the Love and sufferings of your Redeemer, without any warmth of Love to him again; and can read or hear the promises of Grace, and offers of Christ, and Eternal life, without any considerable Joy, or Thankfulness, its time for you then to beg of God a tender heart.

3. When you make many pauses in the work of your Conversion, and are sometime in a good mind, and then again at a stand, as if you were yet unresolved whether to turn or no; When you stick at Christs terms of denying your selves, and crucifying the flesh, and forsaking all, for the hopes of Glory; and think these sayings somewhat hard, and are considering of the matter whether you should yield to them or not; or are secretly Reserving somewhat to your selves; this certainly shews that you are not yet sufficiently humbled, or else you would never stand trifling thus with God.

He



He must yet set your sins in order before you, and hold you a while over the fire of Hell, and ring your Consciences such a peal, as shall make you yield and resolve your doubts, and teach you not to dally with your Maker. If *Pharaoh* himself be off and on with God, and sometime he will let *Israel* go, and then again he will not; God will follow him with plague after plague, till he make him yield, and glad to drive, or hasten them away. And even where he deals in wayes of Grace, he maketh so much use of sorrows, as to make men yield the sooner to his terms, and glad to have Mercy on such terms, if they were harder.

4. When you are heartless and dull under the Ordinances of God, and Scripture hath little life or sweetnes to you, and you are almost indifferent whether you call upon God in secret, or no; and whether you go to the Congregation, and hear the Word, and joyn in Gods Praifes and the Communion of the Saints, and you have no great relish in holy Conference, or any Ordinance, but do them almost meerly for custome, or to please your Consciences, and not for any great need you feel of them, or good you find by them; this shews for certain you want some more of the rod and spur; your hearts be not wakened and broken sufficiently, but God must take you in hand again.

5. When you can be mindless of God, and of the life to come, and forget both your sins and Saviours Blood, and let out your thoughts almost continually upon worldly vanities or common things, as if you were overgrown the need of Christ; this shews that the stone is yet in your hearts, and that God must keep you to an harder dyet to mend your appetites, and make you feel your sin and misery, till it call off your thoughts from things that less concern you, and teach you to mind your everlasting state. If you begin to forget your selves

and him, its time for you to have a remembrancer.

6. When you begin to taste more sweetness in the creature, and be more tickled with applause and honour, and pleased more with a full estate, and more impatient with poverty, or wants, or wrongs from men, and crosses in the world ; and when you are set upon a thriving course, and are eager to grow rich, and fall in love with money ; when you drown your selves in worldly cares, and business, and are combred about many things, through your own choice ; this shews indeed that you are dangerously unhumbled ; and if God have Mercy for you, he will bring you low and make your riches gall and wormwood to you, and abate your appetite, and teach you to know that one thing is needful ; and to be more eager after the food that perisheth not, and hereafter to choose the better part, *Luke 10. 41, 42.*
John 6. 27.

7. When you can return to play with the occasions of sin, or look upon it with a reconcileable mind, as if you had yet some mind on it, and could almost find in your heart to be doing with it again ; when you begin to have a mind of your old company and courses, or begin to draw as near it as you dare, and are gazing upon the bait, and tasting of the forbidden thing, and can scarce tell how to deny your fancies, your appetites, your senses their desires ; this shews that you want some wakening work : God must yet read you another lecture in the black-book, and set you to spell those lines of blood which it seems you have forgotten ; and kindle a little of that fire in your Consciences, which else you would run into, till you feel and understand, whether it be good playing with sin, and the Wrath of God, and the Ever-lasting fire.

8. When you begin to be indifferent as to your Communion with God, and think not much whether he accept you,

you, and manifest his love to you or not, but can huddle up your prayers, and look no more after them, or what becomes of them, and use Ordinances, and seldom enquire of the success: when you can spare the Spiritual Consolations of the Saints, and fetch little of your comfort from Christ, or Heaven; but from your friends, and health, and prosperity, and accommodations; and perhaps can be as merry in carnal company, when you say and do as they, as if you were considering of the love of Christ: this shews that the threatenings went not deep enough. Sorrow hath yet another part to play: You must be taught better to know your home, and to take more pleasure in your father, and your husband, and your brethren, and your Inheritance, than in strangers, or enemies to God and you.

9. When you begin to grow wanton with Ordinances or other Mercies, and in stead of thankful receiving them, and feeding on them, you pick quarrels with them, and nothing will please you: either the Minister is too weak, or he is too curious, or too formal; you must have it this way or that way; either you must have more of a form, or no form; in this gesture, or that order, and something or other is still amiss: this shews that you want humbling, and that you are fitter for the rod, than for meat. If God do but open you a door into your hearts, and shew you the monsters and emptiness that is there, you will then see, that the fault lay somewhere else than in the Minister, or the Ordinances: if it were in them, it was more in you. The cause of your loathing, and quarrelling with the word, was the fulness of your own ~~stomach~~; and God must give you a vomit, ~~or~~ purge, that shall make your hearts ake before ~~it~~ hath done working, and then your appetites will be mended, and your wantonness will cease; and that will be sweet to you which before you slighted.

10. When you begin to be leavened with Pride, and think highly of your selves, and have good conceits of your own parts and performances, and would be noted and taken for some body among the godly, and you cannot endure to be overlookt, or past by : when you think meanly of other mens parts, and duties in comparison of yours, and think your selves as wise as your Teachers, and begin to hear them as Judges, with a Magisterial spirit, and think you could do as well as this your selves ; when you are finding fault with that which should nourish you, and in every Sermon you are most noting the defects, and think that this you could have mended ; when you itch to be Teachers your selves, and think your selves fitter to preach than to learn, to rule than to be ruled, to answer than to ask for resolution ; when you think so well of your selves, that the Church is not pure or good enough for your company, though Christ disowneth it not, and they force you not to sin ; when you grow censorious, and aggravate the faults of others, and extenuate their graces, and can see a mote in anothers eye, but will discern none of their Graces, if they be not as high as mountains, and none can pass for Godly with you, but those of the most eminent magnitude ; when you are itching after Novelties in Religion, and setting your wisdom against the present or antient Church ; and affecting singularity because you will be of no common way ; when you cannot hear this Minister, nor that Minister, though the Ministers of Christ ; and you are harping upon that, *Come out from among them, and be ye separate* ; as if Christ had called you to come out of the Church, when he called you to come out of the company of Infidels : all this cries aloud for further Humiliation : you have a tympanie that must be prickt, to let out the wind that puffs you up : if you be not for perdition, and to be forsaken, and given over

over to your selves, you must be fetcht over again and humbled with a witness. When God hath turned your inside outward, and shewed you that you are poor, and miserable, and blind, and naked, and that you are empty Nothings, who thought so well of your selves ; he will then make you stoop to those that you despised, and think your selves unworthy of the Communion of those that before you thought unworthy of yours. He will make you think yours unworthy to hear those Ministers that you turned your back upon ; and he will take down your teaching, talking vein, and make you glad again to be learners : in a word, he will by Conversion make you as little children, or you shall never enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.

And this spiritual Pride is a most lamentable disease, and the issue usually is exceeding sad. For with many, tis the fore-runner of damnable Apostacy, and God gives them over to their own conceits, and the Wisdom which they so esteem, till it have led them to perdition. And those that are cured, are many of them cured by the saddest way of any men in the world. For its usual with God to let them alone, till they have run themselves into some abominable error, or fallen into some shameful scandalous sin, till they are made an hissing and by-word among men ; that shame and confusion may bring them to their wits, and they may learn to know what it was that they were Proud of, and see that they were but silly worms.

And thus I have shewed you, when you must seek after deeper Humiliation, and may conclude that you are humbled enough : Yea, and when a greater measure is of some *Necessity* to your Souls.

Quest. Well, but yet you have not told us what course a poor Sinner should take in such a strait, when he knows

*not whether his Humiliation, as to the Affectionate part,
be too little or too much,*

Answ. 1. You may partly discern your selves by what is said, whether you have need of more or less Humiliation, if you can but try your hearts by these signs. 2. But yet I would advise and earnestly perswade you, in Cases of difficulty, to betake your selves to some able faithful Minister for resolution. If you feel sorrow seize so deep upon your spirits, that it distempereth you, or threatneth your understanding, or your health, especially if you are either passionate women, or Melancholy persons ; stay not then any longer, lest delay do that which easily cannot be undone, but go and open your case, and crave advice. This is a principal Use of Pastors, that you should have them at hand, to advise with in the diseases and dangers of your Souls, as you do with Physicians, in the diseases and dangers of the body. Lay by all sinful basifullness, and trust not your selves any longer with your own skill, but go to them that God hath set in Office over you for such uses as these, and tell them your Case ; This is Gods way : and he will bless his own Ordinance : Melancholy, and Passionate distempered persons, are not fit judges of their own condition. In this Case you must distrust your own understanding, and be not self-conceited, and stick not obstinately to every fancy that comes into your heads, but in the sense of your weakness rely upon the guidance of your faithful Overseers ; till your distempers are overcome, and you are made more capable of discerning for your selves,

5. You are further here to be informed, that it is not for it self that sorrow and tears are so desireable ; but as they are expressions of a gracious temper of the will, and as they help on the Ends that Humiliation is appointed to. And therefore you may hence learn in what sort you must seek after it. 1. You must not place the chief part of your Religion in it, as if it were a life of meer sorrow, that we are called to by the Gospel. But you must make it a servant to your Faith, and Love, and Joy in the Holy Ghost, and other Graces. As the use of the needle is but to make way for the thred, and then it is the thred, and not the needle that makes the seam : So much of our sorrow is but to prepare for Faith and Love, and these are they that close the Soul with Christ. It is therefore a sore mistake of some, that are very apprehensive of their want of sorrow, but little of their want of Faith, or Love : and that pray and strive to break their hearts, or weep for sin, but not much for those higher Graces, which it tendeth to. One must be done, and not the other left undone.

2. As tears are the Expressions of the heart, so those are the most kindly and sincere, which voluntarily flow from the inward feeling of the evil that we lament ; if you could weep never so much, merly because you think that tears are in themselves necessary, and had not within, the hatred of sin, and sense of its vile and killing nature ; this were not true Humiliation at all. And if the Heart be humbled before the Lord, it is not the want of tears that will cause him to despise it. Some are so backward to weep by Nature, that they cannot weep for any outward thing, no not for the losf of the dearest friend, when yet they would have done ten times more to redeem his life, than some that have tears

at will. Groans are as sure Expressions of sorrow as tears, with such as these. And the hearty rejecting and detestation of sin, is yet a better evidence than either. But where men have naturally a weeping disposition, which they can manifest about Crosses in the world, and yet cannot shed a tear for sin, there the Case is the most suspicious.

3. The principal Cause why you must strive for deeper sorrow, is, that you may obtain the Ends of that sorrow ; that sin may be more odious to you, and more effectually mortified : that self may be taken down, and Christ may be valued, and desired, and exalted, and that you may be fitted for a Holy Communion with God for the time to come, and saved from Pride, and kept in watchfulness.

6. From this that was last said, you have a Rule by which you may certainly discern, what measure of Humiliation it is that must be had. It must go so deep as to undermine our Pride, and so far the heart must needs be broken, as is necessary to break the heart of sin, and carnal self. If this be not done, there's nothing done, though you weep ~~out~~ your eyes. You must be brought so low, that the blood of Christ, and the favour of God, may be more precious in your eyes than all the world, and in your very hearts preferred before it : And then you may be sure that your Humiliation is sincere, whether you have tears or none.

7. From

7. From hence also you may see, that you must take heed of ascribing to your own Humiliation any part of the office and honour of Christ : Think not that you can satisfie the Justice of the Law, or merit any think of God by the worth of your sorrows, though you should weep even tears of blood. It is not true Humiliation if it consist not in the sense and acknowledgment of your unworthiness, and desert of condemnation, and if it do not lead you to look out for pardon and life from Christ, as being lost and wholly insufficient for your selves. And therefore it would be a plain contradiction, if true Humiliation should be taken as Satisfaction, or Merit, or trusted on instead of Christ.

I V. Having thus far opened the Nature and Reasons of true Humiliation, I conclude with that advice which I principally here intended : Refuse not to be throughly and deeply humbled. Be not weary of the humbling workings of the Spirit. Grief is an unwelcome guest to Nature : but Grace can see Reason to bid it welcome. Grace is ingenious, and cannot look back on so great unkindness, with unwillingness to mourn over it, *Zech. 12. 10.* There is somewhat of God in godly sorrow, and therefore the Soul consenteth to it, and seeketh for it, and calls it in : Yea and is grieved that it can grieve no more. Not that sorrow as sorrow is desireable ; but as a necessary Consequent of our grievous sinning, and a necessary Antecedent of our further recovery : As we may submit to Death it self, with a cheerful willingness, because it is sanctified to be the passage into Glory, how dreadful soever it be to Nature in it self : so much more may we submit to Humiliation and brokenness of heart, with

with a holy willingness, because it is sanctified to be the entrance into the state of Grace. Consider for your satisfaction of these following things.

1. The main brunt of your sorrows will be but in the beginning: and when once you are settled in a holy course, you will find more Peace and comfort, than ever you could have had in any other way. I know if you will be meddling with sin again, it will in its measure breed sorrow again: But a godly life, is a life of Uprightness, and Conversion is a departing from sin, and consequently a departing from the Cause of sorrows. And can you not bear such a sorrow for a little while?

2. Consider but whence you are coming? Is it not out of a state of wrath? And where have you been all this while? Was it not in the power of Satan? And what have you been doing all your lives? Hath it not been the drudgery of sin, and the offending of your Lord, and the destroying of your selves? And is it meet, is it reasonable, is it ingenious, for you to come out of such a Case, without lamentation that you staid in it so long?

3. Consider also, that it is Necessary to your own recovery and Salvation. Do you think to take so dangerous a surfeit, and then to be cured without a Vomit? You will endure for the health of your bodies, the bitterest pills, and loathsomest potions, the shortest diet, and the letting out of your blood; for you know that your life lieth on it, and there is no remedy. And should you not endure for the saving of your souls, the bitterest sorrows, the keenest rebukes, the freest Confessions and the most plentiful tears? Sin will not down at easier rates; *Self* will not be conquered else: The heart of *it* will not be broken, till *your* hearts be broken. We know your sorrows. Merit nothing, and make not God amends for your sins; nor is it for want of sufficiency in the blood of Christ that we require them. But it is part of the fruit of

his Blood upon your Souls. If his Blood do not melt and break your hearts, you have no part in him. It becomes you to mourn over him whom you have pierced, *Zeck. 12. 10.* And this fruit of his blood is a preparative to more. You may as well think of being saved without Faith as without Repentance and Humiliation.

4. Consider so much as is bitter in it, is of your own preparation : you may thank your selves for it. Who was it that brought you to this necessity of sorrow ? Have you been all your lite-time surfeiting of the creature, and causing your own disease, and now will you grudge at the trouble of a cure ? Whom have you to blame and find fault with but your selves ? was it not you that sinned ? was it not you that laid in the fewel of sorrows, and sowed the seeds of this bitter fruit, and cherished the Cause of trouble in your selves ? God did not do this : it was you your selves. He doth but undo that which you have been doing. Grudge not therefore at your Physcion, if you must be purged, and let blood, and dieted strictly, but thank your selves for it that have made it so necessary.

5. Consider also that you have a wise and tender Physcion, that hath known what sorrow and grief is himself ; for he was made for you a man of sorrows, *Isaiah 53. 3.* and therefore can pity those that be in sorrow. He delighteth not in your trouble, and grief ; but in your Cure and after-consolations. And therefore you may be sure that he will deal gently and moderately with you : and lay no more on you than is necessary for your good : nor give you any bitterer a cup, than your disease doth require. When he sheweth his greatest liking of the contrite, it is that he may Revive their hearts ; and he professeth withal, that he will not contend for ever, nor be alwayes wrath, lest the Spirit should fail before him, and the Souls which he hath made, *Isaiah 57. 15, 16.* He calls to him the weary and heavy-laden, that he may give

Give them ease, *Math. 11. 28*. He was sent to heal the broken-hearted, to preach deliverance to the Captives, and recovering of sight to the blind, and to set at liberty them that are bruised, *Luke 4. 18*. When he hath broken your hearts, he will as tenderly bind them up, and as safely heal them as you can reasonably desire. Even his *Ministers* that labour to break your hearts, and bring you low, even to the dust, have no worse meaning in it than to bring you to Christ, and Life, and Comfort; and though they are glad to see the weeping eyes of their hearers, and to hear their free Confessions and Lamentations, yet this is not because they take pleasure in your trouble, but because they foresee the saving fruits of it, and know it to be necessary to your Everlasting Peace. You may read what their thoughts are in the words of *Paul*, *2 Cor. 7. 9, 10, 11*. Now I rejoice, not that ye were made sorry, but that ye sorrowed to Repentance: for ye were made sorry after a godly manner, that ye might receive damage by us in nothing. For godly sorrow worketh repentance to salvation, not to be repented of; but the sorrow of the world worketh death. For behold this self-same thing that ye sorrowed after a godly sort, what carefulness it wrought in you; yea what clearing of your selves; yea what indignation; yea what fears; yea what vehement desire; yea what zeal; yea what revenge; &c. Indeed neither Christ, nor his Ministers have that fond and foolish love to you, and pity of you, as you have to your selves: they be not so tender of you, as to save you from the sorrow which is needful to the saving of you from Hell. But they would not put you to any more than needs: nor have you tastea drop of the vinegar and gall, or shed one tear, but what shall tend to your comfort and salvation.

6. Consider what sorrows they be that these sorrows do prevent, and what those suffer in Hell, that avoid this godly

godly sorrow on earth. O Sirs, your Repentance sorrows are Joyes to those : yours have Hope ; but theirs are quickned with Desperation : yours are small and but a drop to their Ocean : yours are Curing ; but theirs are Tormenting : yours are a Fathers Rod ; but theirs are the Rack and Gallows : yours are mixt with love ; but theirs are unmixed, overwhelming them with confusion : yours are short ; but theirs are endless. And had you rather sorrow as they do, then as the godly do ? Had you rather howl with Devils and Rebels, than weep with Saints and Children ? Had you rather be broken in Hell by Torments, than on earth by Grace ? Is it not an unreasonable thing of you, to make such a stir at the sorrow that must save you, when you remember what it would save you from, and what all must suffer that are not Humbled here by Grace. O it is another kind of sorrow that others are now enduring. Grudge not at the pricking of a vein, when so many thousands are everlastingly bleeding at the heart.

7. Consider, the more you are rightly Humbled, the sweeter will Christ and all his Mercies be to you ever after while you live. One taste of the healing Love of Christ, will make you bless those sorrows that prepared for it. The same Christ is not equally esteemed even by all that he will save : and had you not rather be emptied yet more of your selves, that you may be fuller of Christ hereafter ? When you do but feel his arms embracing you, and perceive him in that posture as the predigals Father was, *Luke 15. 20.* you will thank that sorrow that fitted you for his arms.

8. If you be thoroughly humbled, you will walk the more safely all your dayes, *if other things correspond.* It will make you hate the sin you smarted by, and fly the occasions of that which cost you once so dear.

9. The sin of Pride, is one of the most mortal damning

ing sins in the world ; and that which thousands of Professors do miscarry by. And Humiliation is most directly contrary to this : and therefore must needs be an amiable and necessary thing. Its worth all the sorrow that a hundred men endure here, to be saved from this dangerous sin of Pride.

10. A through Humiliation is usually a sign of the greater Exaltation, to come after. *For those that humble themselves shall be exalted, and those that exalt themselves shall be brought low, Luke 14. 11. Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, and he shall lift you up, 1 Pet. 5. 5.* The higher you mean to build, the deeper you will dig to lay the foundation. Your Consolations are like to be greater, as your sorrows have been greater : You may be free from those doubts that follow others all their dayes, lest they were never truly humbled. You need not be still questioning, or pulling up your foundations, as if you were to begin again. It is a sign that you are intended to greater employments (if other things concur.) *Paul must be laid exceeding low in his Conversion, that he might be the fitter as a chosen Vessel, to bear Christs Name among the Gentiles.*

Lay all this now together, Sirs, and consider what cause you have to cherish the Humbling works of Grace, and not to quench them. When your hearts begin to be afflicted for sin, go not among foolish and merry Companions, to drink or laugh it away : drive it not out of your minds, as unkindly, as if it came to do you hurt : but get alone, and consider of the matter, and on your knees in secret, beseech the Lord to follow it home, and break your hearts, and make you meet for his healing consolations, and not to leave you in this red Sea, but to bring you through, and put the Songs of praise into your mouths.

Direct. V. Having thus directed you about your Humiliation, the next direction which I would offer you, that you may not miscarry in the work of Conversion, is this : *See that you close with the Lord Jesus Christ, understandingly, heartily, and entirely as he is revealed, and offered to you in the Gospel.* In this your Christianity doth consist : upon this your Justification and Salvation lie. This is the sum of your Conversion ; and the very heart of the New creature. The rest is all but the preparatives to this, or the fruits of this. Christ is the end and the fulfilling of the Law ; the substance of the Gospel ; the way to the Father : the life, the help, the hope of the Believer. If you know not him, you know nothing : if you possess not him, you have nothing : and if you are out of him, you can do nothing that hath a promise of Salvation. And therefore I shall distinctly (though briefly) tell you what it is to close with Christ, *Understandingly, heartily, and entirely, as he is offered in the Gospel.*

And 1. That you may close with Christ *Understandingly*, you must look to these things : 1. That you understand who Christ is, as in his Person and his Offices : 2. That you understand the *Reason* of his undertaking : 3. That you understand, what it is that he hath done and suffered for us. 4. That you understand the nature and worth of his benefits, and what he *will* do for you. 5. That you understand the terms on which he conveyeth these benefits to men ; and what is the nature, extent, and condition of his promises. And 6. that you understand the *Certain Truth* of all this.

Reader, though this Direction comes in its due place by the order of the matter, yet because it containeth matter of more difficulty than the rest, I desire the Reader to read it last.

For the first, you must understand, that Jesus Christ hath two Natures in one Person: that he is both *God and Man*; As he is *God*, he is of the same substance with his Father, and one in essence with him; the Second Person in the Blessed Trinity; the Word of God; the only begotten Son of the Father; Eternal, Incomprehensible, and Infinite: As *Man*, he hath a true Humane Soul and body as men have: so that his God-head, his Humane Soul, and his Body, are really distinct. This Humane Nature was conceived by the Holy Ghost in the Virgin *Mary*, without man, and born of her, and is so truly united to the Divine Nature, as that they are one Person: Not that the God-head is turned into the manhood, nor the man-hood into the God-head: but the God-head hath taken the man-hood into *Personal Unity* with it self. This was not from Eternity, but when man had sinned, and had lost himself, and needed a Redeemer. By reason of his Miraculous Conception, he was free from all Original sin, being holy, harmless, and undefiled. His Person, and Natures, were fit for his Office; which was to be Mediator between God and man, to make Reconciliation and recover us to God. Had he not been God, but meer man, his dignity would not have been sufficient for such an interposition, nor his obedience or sufferings, of any such value, as to be the price of our Redemption: Nor could he have born our burden, or conquered death, and risen again, and overcome the Prince of death, the Devil; nor have ruled his Church, and preserved, and sanctified them, and prospered his Cause, and subdued his enemies, nor effectually interceded with the Father, nor judged the world, or raised the dead, and done the work of a perfect Saviour. Nor was the Angelical Nature sufficient for this Office. Had he not been man, he had not been neer enough to us, to have suffered in our stead,

stead, and taught us by his Doctrine, and given us his example, nor could he have suffered, or dyed for us: For God cannot die or suffer. As he is God he is One in Nature with the Father; and as he is man he is One in Nature with us: and therefore is fit to Mediate for us; and in him we are brought thus nigh to God. To this Office of the Mediator there are many acts belonging; from whence it hath several denominations, of which more anon. So much of Christ's Person.

2. The next thing that you must understand, is, the *Reasons and Ends*, of his Undertaking; which thought we are not able fully to comprehend (nor the Reason of any of the works of God,) yet must we observe so much as is revealed. And these following Ends or Reasons of this work, do shew themselves clearly in the Scripture, and in the event.

1. One is, *The Demonstration of Gods Justice*; as he is *Governour of the world*, according to the *Law of Nature*. He made man a rational and voluntary Agent, capable of Good or Evil, with Desires and Hopes of the Good, and fears of the Evil; and so to be ruled according to his Nature. He made for him a Law that Revealed Good and Evil, with Promises to move him by Desire, and Hope, and with Threatnings to drive him by necessary Fear. By these engins God resolved to govern mankind. This Law was the Rule of mans *Duty*, and of his *Receivings*, or of Gods Judgement: According to this Law, the world was to be Governed by God. His Governing Justice consisteth in giving all their Due, according to his Law: At least so far as that the end of the Law may be attained, that is, the honour of the Law-giver preserved, transgression made odious by the terror of penalty, and obedience made honourable by its fruits

of impurity and reward: Otherwise the Law would not have deterred effectually from Evil, nor encouraged to Good, especially to so much as Creatures must go through for the Crown of Life: And so the Law would have been no fit Instrument for the Government of the world; that is, the Law would have been no Law. But this the Wise and Righteous God would not be guilty of, of making a Law that was no Law; and was unmeet for the ends, to which he made it; which was essential to it as a Law. There was no way to avoid this intolerable consequent when man had sinned, but *strict execution* of the Law, or by *sufficient Satisfaction* instead of such an Execution. The Execution would have destroyed the Common-wealth, even the whole inferior world at least, the reasonable Creature who was the Subject. The Wisdom, and Love, and Mercy of God would not give way to this, that the world should be destroyed so soon after it was made, and man left remediless in everlasting Misery: Satisfaction therefore must be the Remedy; This must be such as might be as fit to procure the Ends of the Law, as if the Law it self had been executed; that is, as if the offenders had all dyed the death that it did threaten. It must therefore be a publick Demonstration of Justice, and of the odiousness of Sin, to the terrour and warning of sinners for the future: And this was done by Jesus Christ, when none else in Heaven, or Earth could do it: For it did as fully demonstrate the Justice of God, and preserved his honour, and the usefulness of his Law and government, that a Person so High and Glorious, and so dear to him, should suffer so much for sin, as if all the world had suffered for themselves. And thus God *made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin.* 2 Cor. 5. 21. And thus *Christ hath Redeemed us from the Curse of the Law, being made a Curse for us,* Gal. 3. 13.

2. Herby

2. Hereby also God *Demonstrated the Holiness of his Nature*; How much he hateth sin; and how unreconcilable he is to it; as light to darkness: As the Law and Judgements of God do proceed from his Perfect Nature and Will, so do they bear the Image of that perfection and demonstrate it to the world. This therefore is the nobler End, and work of Christ in our redemption, to declare the Holiness and perfection of God in his Nature and Will; though the former (the declaring of his Governing Justice) be the nearer End. If the death of Aarons two sons were such a Declaration, *that God will be Sanctified in all that draw near him*, Lev. 10. 2, 3. If his Laws and present Judgement do declare him to be a *Holy and Jealous God, that will not forgive sin (without a valuable consideration, or satisfaction)* Jos. 24. 19. how much more evidently is this declared in the death of Christ? If the Bethshemites cry out, *Who is able to stand before his Holy Lord God?* 1 Sam. 6. 20. upon the death of 50070. men; how much more may the guilty Soul say so, when he thinks on the Crucified Son of God? As it is the end of Gods execution on transgressors, that the *Lord may be exalted in Judgement, and God that is Holy may be Sanctified in Righteousness*, Isa. 5. 16. so was it his End in the Sacrifice of his Son.

3. Another End of our Redemption by Christ, is the *Demonstration of the Infinite Wisdom of God*. His *Wisdom* in the preventing the ruine of the late created world; that it might not be said sin and Satan had frustrated him of the Glory of his Creation, and destroyed it almoſt as soon as he had made it: Yea in getting an advantage by the malice of his enemies, for the more admirable attainment of the Ends of his Law, and the Glorifying of all his Governing Attributes: He would not have made man a free Agent, and left him in the hand of his own will; and suffered him to sin, if his Wisdom had not known how to

secure his own Interest and Honour to the full. And so also in the œconomy and admirable frame of his Gracious Sapiential Government by Christ, the manifold Wisdom of God doth shine forth, *Ephes. 3. 9, 10.* As the wonderful structure of Heaven and Earth, and every part of this Natural frame, doth gloriously reveal the Wisdom of the Creator; so the wonderful Contrivance of our Redemption by Christ, and the Reparation of the world by him, and the Moral frame of this Evangelical dispensation, doth wonderfully demonstrate the Wisdom of the Redeemer. And as the observation of our Natures may give us Cause to say with *David, Psal. 139. 14.* *I will praise thee, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made;* So the observation of our new Natures and condition, may well cause us to say, *I will praise thee: for I am graciously and wonderfully Redeemed, marvelous are thy Works, and that my Soul knoweth right well.* As Nature may teach us to admire the frame of nature; so Grace will teach us to admire the frame of Grace; and to see the beauty of its several parts; and much more of the whole where all the parts are orderly composed.

4. Yea the very Power of God is demonstrated in Christ. And therefore he is called, *Cor. 1. 24.* *The Power of God, and the Wisdom of God:* not only formally, because Christ himself is the Wise and Powerful God; nor only Efficiently, because God doth exercise his Power and Wisdom, by his Son in Creation, Redemption, and Government; but also Effectually and Objectively, as Christ is the great and most admirable Demonstration of the Power and Wisdom of God in the world.

What work transcendeth the incomprehensible Miracle of the Incarnation? That God should assume the Nature of man into personal Union? The Creation of the

the Sun is no greater a work of *Power*, than the Incarnation and sending of the Son of God, the Intellectual Sun, the Light of the world, *That Living Light, that Light-
neth every one that cometh into the world: though yet the
darkness comprehendeth not his Light*, John 3. 4, 6, 9. What was he but the living visible Power of God, when he healed all diseases, cast out Devils, raised the dead, and rose from the dead himself, and ascended into Glory, and sent down the Holy Spirit on his Church! enduing them with *Power* from on high. *Acts* 1. 8. *Luke* 24. 49. when he was on Earth, he was *Anointed with
the Holy Ghost, and with Power, and went about doing
good, and healing all that were oppressed of the Devil*, *Acts* 10. 38. Being dead, he was declared to be the *Son of God with Power, by the Resurrection from the dead*, *Rom.* 1. 4. When he ascended up on high, he led captivity captive, *Ephes.* 4. 8. Yea, he filled his servants with power, *Acts* 6. 8. Even such as was admired and desired by the ungodly, *Act.* 8. 19. He being the brightness of Gods *Glory, and the express Image of his Person, and upholding
all things by the Word of his Power, when he had
by himself purged our sins, he sate down on the right
hand of the majesty on high, being made so much better
than the Angels as he hath by Inheritance obtained a
more excellent Name than they*, *Heb.* 1. 3, 4. As Christ therefore in his Glorified Humanity united to the God-head, is far more excellent than the Angels of God, and more glorious than the Sun, so is the *Power* of God more abundantly demonstrated in him, than in the Sun, or the Angels, or any other Creature. The Illuminated do know this, and what is the exceeding greatness of his *Power, to us-ward who believe, according to the working
of his mighty Power, which he wrought in Christ
when he raised him from the dead, and set him at his own
right hand in the Celestials, far above all Principality*

and Power, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named, not only in this world, but also in that which is to come; and hath put all things under his feet, and given him to be Head over all things to the Church, which is his Body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all, Ephes. 1. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.

Besides this, even in the Works of Christ for his Church, his Calling, and Sanctifying, and Ruling, and Preserving them, his subduing their Enemies, and raising them from the Dead, and Glorifying them with himself, how glorious is the very Power of God by his Son, 2 Thes. 1. 11. Philip. 3. 10. Ephes. 3. 7, 20. 2 Pet. 1. 3, 16. 1 Cor. 4. 20. Ephes. 6. 10. 1 Cor. 15. 43. 1 Pet. 1. 5. And therefore his Gospel may well be called *The Power of God to Salvation*, Rom. 1. 16. Which hath been the Instrument of his Power in doing such wonderful works in the world, 1 Cor. 1. 18. & 2, 5. 2 Cor. 6. 7, 2 Cor. 5. 3, 4.

5. But the most sweet, and conspicuous End of our Redemption, was the Demonstration of Gods Love and Mercy to Man-kind, and that he might make known the Riches of his Glory on the vessels of Mercy, prepared unto Glory, Rom. 9. 23. Of all Gods Attributes, there is none shineth more illustriously in the work of our Redemption than *Love and Mercy*. *Hereby perceive we the Love of God, because he lay down his Life for us*, 1 Joh. 3. 16. By the Creation, and Sustentation of us we perceive the Love of God, but more abundantly by our Redemption. *In this was manifested the Love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him*, 1 Joh. 4. 9. O wonderful Love which condescendeth to such Rebels, and embraceth such unworthy and polluted sinners, and piteth them even in their blood! Even after we had sold our selves to Satan, and cast away the Mercies of our Creation,

Creation, and had all come short of the Glory of God, and were sentenced to death, and ready for the Execution, then did this wonderful Love step in, and rescue and recover us. Not staying till we repented and cryed for Mercy, and cast our selves at his feet; but seeking us in the Wilderness, and finding us before we felt that we were lost, and being found of us before we sought him, and beginning to us in the depth of our misery. *Herein is Love, not that we Loved God, but that he Loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins,* 1 John 4. 10. Though God Love us not in our sin and misery before our Conversion, so far as in that state to Justifie us, and Adopt us, and take pleasure in us, or have Communion with us in the Spirit, yet doth he so far Love us in that state, as to Redeem us by the Blood of Christ, and tender us his Salvation, and to bring in his chosen effectually to entertain his offer. And thus *the Love of God is shed abroad in our hearts, by the Holy Ghost which is given to us;* for when we were yet without strength, *in due time Christ dyed for the ungodly:* and God commended his Love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ dyed for us, Rom. 5. 6, 8. Greater Love hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends, Joh. 15. 13. What was the Son of God, but *Love Incarnate?* Love born of a Virgin? Love coming down from Heaven to Earth, and walking in flesh among the miserable, seeking and saving that which was lost: was it not Love that spoke those words of life, those comfortable promises, those necessary precepts, those gracious encouragements which the Gospel doth abound with? Was it not Love it self, that went preaching Salvation to the Sons of death, and deliverance to the Captives, and offered to bind up the broken hearts, Luke 4. 18.? Was it not Love that invited the weary and heavy-laden, Matthew 11. 28.? And that sent even to the high-ways, and the

hedges to compel men to come in that his house might be filled, Matth. 22. 9, 10. Luke 14, 23. Was it not *Love* it self that went up and down healing and doing good; that suffered them for whom he suffered, to scorn him, and spit upon him, and buffet him and condemn him? that being reviled, reviled not again: that gave his life an offering for sin, and dyed, and prayed for them that murdered him? No wonder if the *Gospel* be it that teacheth us to call God by the name of *Love* it self, 1 John 4. 8. For it is the *Gospel* that hath most fully revealed him to be so. No wonder if the *Gospel* do so frequently and importunately require us to *Love one another*, and even to lay down our lives for Christ, and for one another, when it hath given us such a ground and motive, and president for our *Love*. He that seeth the true face of Redemption, and understandeth, and favoureth the *Gospel* and the Grace of Christ, must needs see most cogent Reasons for such duties, 1 John 4. 7,8,9,10,11, 12. Beloved, let us *Love one another*, for *Love* is of God: and every one that Loveth is born of God, and knoweth God: he that Loveth not knoweth not God, for God is *Love*. If God so Loved us, we ought also to *Love one another* — If we *Love one another*, God dwelleth in us, — so 1 John 3. 10, 11, 14, 16, 17, 18. No wonder if by this *Love* we know that we are translated from death to life, and if by it the Children of God be known from the Children of the Devil, 1 John 3. 10, 11, 14. For *Love* is the very Nature and Image of our Father. No wonder if this be the *New Commandment*, which had newly such a powerful motive, and president: and no wonder if it be the great distinguishing Character, by which all men shall know that we are the Disciples of Christ, John 13. 35. When he had set us such a Copy, and taught us this Lesson by such effectual means; writing it out for us in lines of Blood, even of his own most precious

cious Blood, and shedding it abroad in our hearts by the Holy Ghost.

But if we should come down to the particular benefits of Christ's death, and see what Love is manifested in them, even in our Calling, our Justification, our Adoption or Sanctification, our Preservation, and our everlasting Glorification, we should find our selves in an Ocean that hath neither banks nor bottom, and when we have fathomed as far as we can, we must be contented to stand and admire it, and to say with the Beloved Apostle, *Behold what manner of Love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the Sons of God!*

1 John 3. 1.

And this is the blessed imployment of the Saints, which they are called to by the *Gospel*, to live in the participation, and consideration and admiration of this wondrous Love, *that Christ may dwell in their hearts by Faith, and so being rooted and grounded in Love, they may be able to comprehend with all Saints, what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height, and to know the Love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, and be filled with all the fulness of God*, Ephes. 3. 17, 18, 19. And withal, *to be followers of God as dear Children, and walk in Love as Christ hath Loved us, and given himself for us, an offering, and a Sacrifice to God, for a sweet smelling savour*, Ephes. 5. 1, 2. *And to love without dissimulation*, Rom. 12. 9, 10. *Even from a pure heart frequently*, 1 Pet. 1. 22. *That we love as brethren, being compassionate, pitiful, and courteous; not rendering evil for evil, but contrariwise blessing; knowing that we are thereunto called, that we should inherit a blessing*, 1 Pet. 3. 8, 9. *And that we keep our selves in the Love of God*. Jud. 21. *that nothing may be able to separate us from it*, Rom. 8. 35, 36, 37. *And if we thus imitate our Heavenly pattern, the God of Love*

and

and Peace will be with us, 2 Cor. 13. 11. And thus I have shewed you the principal Ends of the undertaking of Christ in the work of our Redemption, especially as they are attained directly by his Cross, and Resurrection.

6. Another end also is apparent in the Scripture; which is the *Glorifying of Gods Rewarding Justice*, together with his *Mercy in the Salvation of his Elect*. This End he partly attajneth *here* (for God hath his Ends continually:) In this life his servants have much of his *Mercy*; and the beginnings of their Reward in the beginning of their *Salvation*; But the fulness is hereafter in their *Glorification*. All his promises he performeth in their seasons. Even in the present pardon of our sins he honoureth his *Faithfulness* and *Justice*, 1 John 1. 9. His *Faithfulness* in making good his promise, and his *Justice* in Rewarding the performers of the condition, and giving what his promise had made their due: that so men may even here in part discern between the *Righteous* and the *Wicked*; between him that serveth God, and him that serveth him not; while they see God esteeme of his people as his *Jewels*, and spare them as a man spareth his son that serveth him, Mal. 3. 17, 18. The King of Zion is just, having *Salvation*, Zach. 9. 9. The *Righteousness* of God is manifested in our *Justification*, Rom. 3. 21. 22. Even the *Righteousness* of God, which is by *Faith* of Jesus Christ unto all, and upon all them that believe; for there is no difference; For all have sinned and come short of the *Glory* of God; being *Justified* freely by his grace, through the *Redemption* that is in Jesus Christ, whom God hath set forth to be a *propitiation*, through *Faith* in his *Blood*, to declare his *Righteousness*: for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God: to declare, I say, at this time his *Righteousness*; that he might be just, and the *Justifier* of him that believeth in Jesus, Rom. 3. 25, 26. But

But it is most eminently at Judgement, and in the world to come, that this Remunerative Justice with mercy will be Glorified : *When Christ shall come (purposely) to be glorified in his Saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (not only in himself, but in them :) and that because they were believers,* 2 Thes. 1. 10. *When we have fought the good fight, and finished our Course, and kept the Faith, we shall find that there is laid up for us a Crown of Righteousness, which the Lord the Righteous Judge shall give us, and all that love his appearing at that day,* 2 Tim. 4. 8. He will justify and applaud them before all the world, yea and adjudge them to everlasting Life, with a *Well done, Good and Faithful servant : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ; I will make thee Ruler over many things ; even Because they had been faithful in a little,* Luke 19. 17. Matth. 25. 21, 23. Because they shewed their love to him in his members, he will say to them, *Come ye blessed of my Father, inherite the Kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world,* Matth. 25. 34, 35, 36. He that now commandeth us to say to the Righteous, *It shall be well with him,* Isa. 3. 10. Will in Righteousness Cause it then to be well with him. Then shall the Righteous shine forth as the Sun in the Kingdom of their Father, Matt. 13. 43. And the Righteousness and Mercy of their Father shall as conspicuously and gloriously shine in them. For it is a day appointed for the Revelation of the Righteous Judgement of God, who will render to every man according to his deeds, Rom. 2. 5, 6. The present Faith and Patience of the Saints in all the Persecutions and Tribulations which they endure, is a manifest token of the Righteous Judgement of God, that they may be accounted worthy of the Kingdom of God, for which they suffer : It being a Righteous thing with God to Recompence Tribulations to them that trouble us, and to us that are troubled, Rest with the Saints, 2 Thes. 1. 5, 6, 7. For the

the Righteous Lord loveth Righteousness, Psal. 11. 7. and in Righteousness will he Judge the world, Acts 17. 31. Rev. 19. 11. And therefore in the keeping of his Word there is a great Reward, Psal. 19. 11. Yea a cup of water given in Love to him, shall not be unrewarded, Matt. 10. 41, 42. To him that soweth Righteousness shall be a sure reward, Prov. 11. 18. If in this life men are forc'd to say, Verily there is a Reward for the Righteous; Verily there is a God that Judgeth in the Earth, Psal. 58. 11. Much more when we receive the Reward of the Inheritance, Col. 3. 24. This causeth the Saints to forsake the pleasures of sin, because they have respect to the recompence of Reward, Heb. 11. 26. This is it that maketh them Rejoyce and be exceeding glad in their persecutions, because that great is their Reward in Heaven: and therefore it is that they Cast not away their confidence, because it hath great Recompence of Reward, Heb. 10. 25. If we let no man beguile us of our Reward, Col. 2. 18. And if we Look to our selves that we lose not those things that we have wrought, we shall receive a full Reward, 2 John 8. For the Lord hath said, Behold I come quickly, and my Reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be, Rev. 22. 12.

7. Another End of Christs undertaking in this blessed work, is, The Complacency and Glory of God in the Love, and Praise, and service of his Redeemed ones; in some measure here; but in perfection when they are perfected. Sin had made us unserviceable to God: And Christ bringeth us back into a fitness for his service: He disposeth us Godward by Faith and Love; and he hath Redeemed us from our iniquity, and purifieth to himself a Peculiar People zealous of good works, Tit. 2. 14. To which he createth us, that we should walk in them, Eph. 2. 10. And with such Sacrifice God is wellpleased, Heb.

Heb. 13. 16. Phil. 4. 18. *The blood of the Covenant was therefore shed, to make us perfect in every good work to do his will, who worketh in us that which is well-pleasing in his sight*, Heb. 13. 20, 21. And this must be our care, to walk worthy of the Lord in all well-pleasing, being fruitful in every good work, Col. 1. 10. And then whatsoever we ask, we shall receive of him, because we keep his Commandment, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight, 1 John 3. 22. See 1 Thes. 4. 1. Heb. 11. 6. Rom. 8. 8. 2 Tim. 2. 4. 1 Cor. 7. 32. Heb. 11. 5.

But principally when we are Glorified, and fitted by our perfection for the Perfect Love, and Praises of God, then will God perfectly take pleasure in us, and in our Love and Praise. The Glory of the new *Jerusalem* and the Harmony of everlasting Praise and Thanksgiving will be his delight. *He will Rejoyce over us with joy, he will Rest in his Love; he will joy over us with singing*, Zeph. 3. 17.

8. Another End of Christ's undertaking this blessed work, is *the Everlasting Glory of God which shall shine forth in the Glorified Manhood of the Redeemer, and the everlasting complacency that God will have in him, for his own perfection, and the work he hath wrought*.

Though Christ had no need to suffer for any sin or want of his own; yet was it his personal dignity, dominion, and Everlasting Glory, as well as our Salvation, that was intended by him, and by the Father in this work, and which he was to receive as the *Reward* of his performances, Rom. 14. 7. Phil. 2. 8, 9, 10. Matth. 28. 18, 19. Heb. 1. 3, 4, 6. Ephes. 12. 22. Nay if we may make comparisons, this seemeth the highest part of Gods End, in the sending of his Son. As there is no part of all the Works of God, to be compared to the Person of the Redeemer, so consequently there is none

in which the Glory of God will shine forth so admirably, and illustriously as in Christ. If on Earth the Heavenly voice bear witness that it was *in him that the Father was well-pleased*, Matth. 3. 17. & 17. 5. & 12. 18. Which was uttered both at his Baptism, and his Transfiguration, when his Disciples saw a glimpse of his glory, and he was the *chosen Servant of God in whom his Soul delighted*, Isa. 42. 1. Much more is it apparent, that in his Heavenly Glory he will be the Fathers Everlasting Pleasure and delight: and in him, and by him, and for the work that he hath wrought, the Redeemed in glory will honour him for ever, Rev. 5. 9. *He is the head of the body, the Church: the beginning, the first-born from the dead, that in all things he might have the preheminence: For it Pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell*, Col. 1. 17, 18, 19. And therefore in him the Glory of God will shine in fulness, and he shall have the preheminence in the Fathers Everlasting Love. When Christ prayed, John 12.28. *Father Glorifie thy Name*: he was answered by a Voice from Heaven, *I have Glorified it, and will Glorifie it again*. Even in the Son that thus desired it. He hath done it on Earth, and he will do it again more perfectly in Heaven. *He hath glorified the Son, that the Son also may Glorifie him*, John 17. 1. As he glorified his Father on Earth, and finished the work which he gave him to do, so the Father hath now Glorified him with himself, that in his Glory he may be yet more glorified, John. 17. 4, 5, 6. In his Transfiguration his Face did shine as the Sun, John 17. 2. And in his appearance to Paul, his shining light did cast him blind-fold and trembling on the Earth, Acts 9.4,5. It was Stephens encouragement to the suffering of his Martyrdom, to see the *glory of God*, and Jesus standing on Gods right hand, Acts 7. 55, 56. When John saw him on the Lords day in the spirit, he beheld his eyes as a flame of fire, and

and his feet like burning brass in the furnace, and his voice was as the sound of many waters, and in his right hand were the stars, and out of his mouth went a sharp two-edged sword, and his countenance was as the Sun that shineth in his strength, Rev. 1.14,15,16. His voice also did proclaim his Glory, *I am the first and the last. I am he that liveth and was dead; and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen, and have the keys of Hell and of Death,* vers.17,18. It was the *Lord of Glory* that was Crucified, 1 Cor. 2.8. *God was manifest in the flesh, Justified in the Spirit, seen of Angels, preached to the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up into Glory,* 1 Tim. 3.16. where he is *Glorified* with the Father in the praises of the *Saints*, Rev.5.12,13. The Glory in the Holy Mount was great at the giving of the Law: but it was no Glory to that of the Gospel administration, 2 Cor.3.7,10. much more to that of the Glorified Redeemer who hath overcome, and is set down with the Father in his throne, Rev. 3.21. Yea the Glory that will be given to God for ever will be through Jesus Christ, Rom. 16. 17.

And indeed it is a very great Question whether we shall immediately see the *Essence of God in Heaven*, or only see him in the Glorified Redeemer; and whether Christ will not then be the *Mediator of our Fruition*, as he was here the *Mediator of Acquisition*. But certain we are that God will be everlastinglly pleased and glorified in the person of the Redeemer, as well as in the Church, which is his body.

9. And *reductively* it may be said to be Gods end in this blessed work, that he may *more fully demonstrate his Vindictive Justice, according to the Gospel, or Law of the Redeemer, upon them that finally reject his grace, than it would have been manifested on the terms of the Law of Creation on Adam and his off-spring.* Though Christ came not into the world, (primarily) to condemn the world,

but

but that the world through him might be saved; yet was it his purpose that unbelievers that love darkness rather than light, should fall under the special condemnation, John 3. 18, 19. And that they should not see life, but the wrath of God should abide upon them, vers. 36. God would not so much as permit them to reject his Salvation, but that he knows how he may be no loser by them: *He suffereth with much patience the vessels of wrath, to make his Wrath and Power known*, Rom. 9. 22. The mouths of the condemned will be utterly stopped, and they will be left speechless, when they are Judged on terms of Grace, much more than they would have been if they had been judged only by the first Law: when they see Christ and Heaven that was offered them, and remember their wilful and obstinate contempt of them, their own Consciences and tongues shall justifie God, and confess that he is Righteous in the dreadulest of his Judgements. *If the word spoken by Angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward, how shall they escape that neglect so great Salvation, which at first began to be spoken by the Lord, and then was confirmed by them that heard him, God also bearing them witness with signs and wonders, and with divers Miracles and gifts of the Holy Ghost?* Heb. 2. 3, 4. And if they escaped not, that refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not they escape that turn away from him that speaketh from Heaven: *For our God is a consuming fire*, Heb. 12. 25, 29. So much of the Ends of Christs undertaking in our Redemption.

In which you may see that there are divers things which Demonstrate the Glory of the forementioned Attributes of God, in this Gospel Dispensation. 1. It shineth forth in the Person of the Redeemer as he was on Earth, in his Nature and wonderful conception, and his perfections. 2. And it also shineth forth in the

Actions

Actions of his life, overcoming the world, and the Devil, and perfectly fulfilling the Law of God: So that the Image of his Father did shine forth in his Conversation. 3. And also in his Death and Sufferings was the Father glorified, as I shewed before. 4. And also in the most Wise and Holy frame of those Laws by which the Grace of the Mediator is conveyed, and the Church governed. 5. And by the Image of God, by the imprest of those Laws on the Souls of his Saints, and by the holiness of their lives, the Glory of God is also demonstrated. 6. As also by the Justifying sentence of the Judge, and the glorious Reward bestowed on the Faithful. 7. And by the Condemning sentence and execution on the ungodly, in whom Vindictive Justice will be honoured. 8. And in the perfection of the Individual Saints, and their perfect Love and Praise. 9. And in the Saints as imbodyed in the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, the Glory of which will be the Glory of God. 10. And principally in the Blessed Person and Work of the Redeemer. In all these will Gods Glory shine forth for ever.

Quest. *But to whom is it that God doth thus Demonstrate his Glory?*

Answ. 1. To the Saints in this life, in that degree as is suited to a state of Grace, and the condition of a traveller that lives by Faith. We are apt to look upward, and long after fuller revelations of the Heavenly Kingdom and Mystery, and marvail that God will not shew himself more fully to his Saints on Earth. Fain we would know more of God, and Christ, and the life to come, and it is oft matter of some temptation to us, that God doth not satisfie these desires, but leaveth them in so much darkness, that are willing of his light. But this is because we do not consider how much of Glory consisteth in the light: and that Grace is more in the Desires

of it than in the possession : and if we should have as much of it as we desire, it were but to bring down Heaven on Earth. Means must be suited to their ends. God will discover to us so much of his Glory, as may quicken our desires, and keep alive our hope, and patience, and endeavours, but not so much as shall satisfie us, and answer our expectations. For Heaven is not here. We must not carry our Home about with us, but travel towards it, that we may reach it at the last.

2. God doth even now Demonstrate the Glory of his forementioned Attributes, in the work of Redemption, not only to his Saints, but to the Angels of Heaven. The consideration of this hath often satisfied me, when I have been tempted to wonder at the work of Redemption, that God should so far condescend as to be incarnate, and make such glorious discoveries of himself, and yet that so few in the world should take notice of it, and he should have from men so little of the honour that he seemeth by his preparations to expect. But the most part of the world did never once see the Glory that shineth to them in the Redeemer. But God hath another world besides this, and other Creatures besides man, in all likely-hood incomparably more numerous (perhaps thousands for one) and certainly more excellent. And though Christ did assume the Nature of Angels, and came not to Redeem them that needed no Redeemer, yet may the lustre of this work of Redemption appear to the Angels more clearly than to man ; and God may have a thousand fold more glory from them that are but the spectators & admirers, than from us in our present darkness, that are yet possessors. As we that are here on Earth, do look upon and admire the Glory of the Sun, which is as it were in another world, and out of our reach ; so the Angels much more may gaze upon the Glory of the

Son

Son of God, and admire the Lord in the work of our Redemption, though they were not the Redeemed ones. So that unto them doth God shine forth by it in his excellencies.

Perhaps you'll say, that cannot be: because this is but seeing him in a glaſs; when the Angels, see him face to face: and immediately behold his blessed Essence: or else how can the Saints expect that beatifical Vision. To which I answer first, that I am uncertain whether seeing face to face be an immediate intuition of the Essence of God, or only such a sight of his Glory in those emanations, that are as appropriated to the place or state of Blis. Gods Essence is every where: but that Glory is not every where: And so I know not whether our present knowledge be not called *Enigmatical, and as in a glaſs,* comparatively to that Glory prepared for the Saints: But ſecondly, I answer, that certain I am that God is Demonstrated to his angels in the Redeemer, yea in the Church it ſelf, which is the Subject of his Grace, and that they are both Affected, and Impolyed about us accordingly. He that ſpoiled *Principalities, and Powers, and openly triumphed over them, and by death, overcame him that had the power of death,* Col. 2. 15. Heb. 2. 14. And had ſo much to do againſt the evil Angels as enemies, no doubt is joyfully obſerved by the good Angels. And he that is ſet ſo far above *Principalities, and Powers, and Might, and Dominion, and every name that is named in this world, or that which is to come,* Ephes. 1. 21. And is gone into Heaven, and is on the right hand of God, Angels, and Authorities, and Powers being made ſubject to him, (1 Pet. 3. 22.) no doubt is honoured and admired by Angels. And indeed it is expreſly ſaid, *Let all the Angels of God worship him,* Heb. 1. 6. And what are they all but *Ministring spirits, ſent forth to Minister for them who ſhall be heirs of Salvation?* Heb. 1. 14. And

therefore sent forth by Jesus Christ, the Lord of Saints. Which makes some think that the title of Angels was never given to any of these Spirits, till the Mediators undertaking, and that it was only as they were his deputed messengers, or servants for the Ends of that undertaking. Sure we are, they attended his birth with their acclamations, and his life and sufferings (as far as was meet) with their service; and that they are deputed to bear his servants in their hands, that they dash not their foot against a stone; that they are ascending, and descending, and are present with the Churches in their Holy Worship: and that they rejoice at the *Conversion* of one sinner: and that the *least* of Christ's servants, have their Angels beholding the *face* of God: and that the Law was given by their disposition or ordination; and they attend the departing Souls of Believers; and that they contend against evil spirits for our good, and are encamped about us, and that they shall attend the Lord at his coming to Judgement, and be his glorious retinue, and Instruments in the work; and that they are numbered with us, as members of the same Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and that we shall be like or equal to them, *Luke* 2.14, 15. *Mark* 4. 11. *Luke* 22. 43. *Acts* 10. 6, 7, 22. *Psal.* 34.7. & 91.11. *Matt.* 13.39, 41. & 16.27. & 24.31. & 25.31. & 26.53. *Luk.* 16.22. *Matt.* 18.1c. 2 *Thes.* 1.7. *Luke.* 20.36. *Mark* 12. 25. *Acts* 7. 65. *Gal.* 3. 19. *Heb.* 12. 22. 2 *Pet.* 2. 11. *Luke* 15. 10. *John* 1. 51. Yea men must be either confessed or denied, owned or disowned, before the Angels, *Luke* 12. 8, 9. See *Rev.* 19. 18. *Rev.* 3. 5. But if all this seem not sufficient to perswade you that the Angels are so far interested in the affairs of God about the Redeemer, as to behold and admire him in this blessed work, take notice of the express affirmations of the Scriptures, 1 *Pet.* 1.12. *Which thing, the Angels desire to look into.*

And

And why but to see and admire the Wisdom, and Power, and Goodness, and Mercy, and Justice of God, shining forth in the Redeemer? If this be not plain enough, mark well those words, *Ephes. 3. 10. To the intent that now unto the Principalities, and Powers in Heavenly places, might be known by the Church, the manifold Wisdom of God.* You see here that the Church of the Redeemed, is that admirable looking-glass, which God hath set up to this very intent, that his Angels may in it, or by it, behold the manifold Wisdom of God; Yea and that upon the full revelation of Christ by the Gospel, they saw that which did more fully inform, and illuminate them. No doubt but the very work of Creation, yea of this inferior world, that are made for the habitation, and use of man, are far better known to Angels than to man: for we know but little of what we daily see and use: And consequently it is by Angels more than by men, that God is beheld, admired, and glorified in them. And if it be so in these works of Creation, we may well say, it is so in the works of Redemption.

3. But when we are perfected in Glory, then *we ourselves* shall clearly see the Glory of this Mystery, and of God therein. As it is not till we come to Heaven, that we shall have the fullest *benefits* of Redemption, so is it not till then, that we shall have the fullest *understanding* of it, and God have his fullest praises for it. As we are here but sowing the seed of our own Glory, which we must reap in the everlasting fruition of God; so God is here but sowing those seeds of his Praise, and Glory, which he will eternally reap by this blessed work. Do not therefore judge of the ends, and fruits of Christ's undertakings, by what you see him attain on Earth, but by what he shall attain in Heaven, when he hath fully seen the travail of his Soul, to his satisfaction,

and hath presented the whole Church without spot unto God, and when the Glorious marriage of the Lamb, with the Heavenly *Jerusalem* is solemnized, and the Kingdom delivered up to the Father, *Isa. 53. 11.* *Ephes. 5. 27.* *Rev. 19. 7.* *1 Cor. 15. 24.* It will be another manner of *conceiving* which we shall have in Heaven of this blessed work, when we see the face of our Glorified Lord, and fully possess the fruits of his Redemption, than this is that we have now by our weak believing. We shall then have another manner of sight of the Wisdom, and Power, and Love, and Justice that appear to man, in the face of Christ, than now we have.

4. Yea the tormenting discoveries of the Glory of Redemption to the condemned rejectors of it, shall also Contribute to the Glory of God.

You see then that this work hath most Glorious Ends, which I have mentioned the more largely, both to *remove their temptations* that are apt to think that it *was an unnecessary thing*, and therefore the less regardable, and to teach men the *true value of it*, by *shewing them the true Ends*.

For the *former*, I say, There was no necessity that God should make the world, and reveal his Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, in this excellent frame, but what did suppose the free Will of God, the Original Cause. Will you therefore say, that the Creation is vain; and undervalue Gods admirable works in which he thus revealeth himself to the intellectual Creatures? So here; we confess that there could be no necessity of Redemption, but what was Originally derived from the Will of God, (though a necessity *ad finem* there was, from the constitution of things, upon supposition of what went before the undertaking.) But yet shall we undervalue so glorious a work, in which the Divine perfections do so fully reveal themselves to the world?

And

And I say the more of this, because I do observe that its the not apprehending the high and excellent Ends of Redemption, that makes it so much slighted, and consequently tempteth many to *infidelity*. For the Ends and Uses do set the value on the means. That is of little worth, that is to little purpose, and doth but little good. If men understood more the Ends of Redemption, and how much of God doth shine forth in the world, in the Person, and Life, and Laws, and Works of the Son of God, they would then live in the admiration of it, and be always searching, and prying into it, and desire to know nothing but God in Christ Crucified, and account all things else but as loss and dung for this excellent knowledge: But alas, the most do scarce discern any higher Ends of Christ, or other use of him, than to save themselves from Hell, and for want of Faith, and through Humiliation, they have but little sense of that: And therefore no wonder if the Redeemer be neglected, and God denied the honour of the work.

So much of this second point, the Reasons, and Ends of Christ's undertaking, I shall purposely be shorter on the rest.

3. The third point to be understood concerning our Redeemer, is, *What he hath done and suffered for mankind, and wherein his Redeeming work consisted both as to the General and the special part.* Should I stand on these at large, I must needs be voluminous; and therefore I shall but briefly recite them for your remembrance.

1. The first thing that Christ did for the saving of the world, was his Interposing between offending man, and the wrath of God; and so preserving the world from that destruction, which the execution of the violated Law would have procured; Undertaking then to become

the Seed of the women, and so to break the Serpents head; and revealing this Grace by slow degrees, till the time of his coming,

And then when the fulness of time was come, he was made man, being conceived by the Holy Ghost, and born of the Virgin *Mary*, and so the Word was made flesh, *and dwelt among men, who beheld his Glory, as the Glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of Grace, and Truth*, John 1. 14. Thus God was manifested to men in the flesh, 1 Tim. 3. 16.

3. And as he was perfectly Holy in his Nature without any stain or guilt of Original sin; so was he perfectly Holy in his Life, and never broke the least Command of God in thought, word, or deed. Never could any convince him of sin, John 8. 46. He fulfilled the Law of Nature, which all the world was under, and the Mosaical Law which the Jews were under, and the special Law that was given to himself as Mediator, and was common to no other Creature in the world,

And thus he preformed these excellent works. 1. By the fulfilling of all Righteousness he pleased the Father, always accomplishing his Will; and so did much of the work of a Saviour in Meriting for us, Matth. 3. 15. & 5. 17. John 8. 29. Matth. 12. 18. & 17. 5. Rom. 5. 19, *For such an High-priest became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate, from sinners*, Heb. 7. 26.

2. He hath conquered the Tempter, that conquered us. And therefore did he purposely yield himself to such sore temptations, Matth. 4. that his Victory might be Glorious, and the Second *Adam* might overcome him that had overcome the first. And thus he hath done much to the rescue of the Captivated,

3. Hereby also he hath overcome the world, which overcame the first *Adam*, and his posterity: he trampled upon its seeming glory; he neglected and despised its

its baits and allurements ; he went through all its cruel persecutions , and oppositions : so that the world now as well as the Devil , are conquered things. By which he hath made way for the Victory of his followers , and given them ground of great encouragement , *John 16.*

33. Be of good cheer ; I have overcome the world. Yea I may say in a fort he hath overcome the flesh also. For though Christ had no corrupt flesh as we have to contend with , yet had he a natural and sensitive appetite , which the Command of God did forbid him to fulfil. And therefore when innocent Nature desired that the Cup might pass from him , and abhor death by a simple *Aversness* ; yet perfect Holiness permitted not this to proceed to a *Refusal* by the comparing *Intellect* , and *Choosing* , or *Refusing Will* ; but saith. *Not my will , but thine be done.* And when Christ was hungry and weary , the desire of food and rest by the sensitive appetite was no sin : but when the work of God forbade the fulfilling of such desires , he still denied them.

4. Hereby also he hath set us a *perfect copy and pattern* of obedience , and is become our example , whom we must endeavour to imitate. For he knew that it is the most effectual teaching , to do it by words and deeds together. It is a great help to us , when we do not only hear his voice , but see also which way he hath gone before us. When he saith , *Learn of me* , he directs us , not only to his words ; but to himself , who was *weak* , and *holy* , *Matth. 11. 28.*

5. Moreover Christ received of the Father fulness of the Spirit , and Power , for the benefit of the Redeemed : that he might be meet to be the Head , and the Treasury of the Church , and to shower down the streams of Grace upon his Members ; and when all Power was given him in Heaven , and Earth , he might be

be fitted to the following application of his benefits, and to rule, and support, and defend his people.

6. Moreover he was pleased himself to become a Preacher of the Gospel of Salvation, not to all the world, but principally as a Minister of the *Circumcision*, that is, the Jews, *Rom. 15.8.* He that purchased Salvation, condescended also to proclaim it. The Preaching of the Gospel, is a work that Christ thought not himself too good for, sometimes to many, sometimes to one or two, as he had opportunity; often with tears; and always with earnestnes and compasition, did he go about doing good, and seeking the *lost*, and healing the *diseased*, and calling men to Faith, and Repentance, and offering, them the Grace, and Life which he purchased.

7. And he was pleased also to seal up his Doctrine by his Works, casting out Devils, healing all diseases, raising the Dead, and working divers other Miracles, to assure them that he came from *God*, and did *his* Work, and revealed *his* Will, that so the world might have no excuse for their unbelief; but that they that would not *believe* upon any other account, might yet *believe* him for the sake of his works, *John 3.2.* *Acts 2.22.* *Heb. 2.4.* *John 5.36.* & *10.25, 38.* & *14.11, 12.* & *15.24.*

8. Besides all this, he gave up himself, to a life of suffering, being despised by his Creatures whom he came to Redeem, and destitute voluntarily of fleshly pleasures, and of that riches, and worldly provision that might procure it: he was a man of sorrows, afflicted from his youth; persecuted from the Cradle; he gave his Cheeks to the smiters, and his Person to be made the scorn of fools: he was crowned with thorns, spit upon, and buffeted, and having sweat water, and blood in his Agonie in the garden, he was hanged on a Cross, where

where thieves were both his Companions and revilers, where they gave him gall, and vinegar to drink, pierced his blessed body with a spear, and put him to a shameful cursed Death. But he endured the Cross, despising the shame, and gave up himself thus a Sacrifice for sin, and bore our transgressions ; that we might be healed by his stripes ; and having ransomed us by his Blood, he was buried as an offender, continuing for a time in the Power of the Grave, *Isa. 53.* throughout, *Matth. 26. & 27. Heb. 12. 2.* All this he consented to undergo (though he consented not to the sin of them that did inflict it) for he laid down his *Life*, it was not taken from him against his Will, *John 10. 17, 18.*

9. Having thus paid the price of our Reconciliation to God, the third day he Rose again from the dead : though Souldiers watcht his grave, because he had foretold them that he would rise the third day, yet were they soon daunted by the glory of an Angel, that came and rolled away the stome. And so Christ made known his Divine Power, and Victory, and the finishing of his work: and as by death he overcame him that had the power of death, that is, the Devil, *Heb. 3. 14.* So by his Resurrection he triumphed over death it self. For how should the grave detain the innocent, and death overcome the Lord of Life ? This was the glorious day of triumph : in remembrance of this, he appointed the Lords day to be observed by the Church. The Resurrection of Christ, was the confusion of all the powers of darkness, the great Argument to confirm the truth of his Doctrine, and prove his Godhead to the unbelieving world.

10. Being risen, he more fully revealed his Gospel, and sent forth his Apostles and Disciples, to proclaim the offers of Life to the world, and settle the Churches in an Holy Order, when they had gathered them, and to ordain such Ministers to succeed them, as might carry

ry on his work to the end of the world, *Matth. 28. 19, 20.* And thus he is the faithful Law-giver to the Church.

11. When he had abode thus forty days on earth, he ascended up into Heaven while his Disciples stood by, and gazed after him, *Acts 1. 9, 10.* And there hath taken possession in our Nature, advancing it to the Fathers right hand in Glory, which was by sin deprrest so low in misery. And so he is gone to *prepare a place for us*, leaving us a certain word of promise that *he will come again, and take us to himself, that where he is, there we may be also*, *John 14.2,3.* And as *our life now is hid there with Christ in God, so when he shall appear, we shall appear with him in glory*, *Col. 3. 3, 4.*

12. Being ascended, he manifested his Power and his Truth in sending down the Holy Ghost upon his Disciples, enabling them to do such works as he had done, and such as were necessary to convince the unbelieving world, and to conquer the opposing wisdom and power of the flesh: enabling them to speak in variety of Languages, which they had never before learnt: as also to understand, and powerfully preach the mysteries of the Gospel, to confirm their Doctrine by Miracles, healing the lame, the blind, the sick, casting out Devils, raising the dead, and conquering the resistance of Principalities and Powers, in seeming weakness, and in a contemptible garb. Not to speak now of the Sanctifying Work of the same Spirit, on them, and on the rest of the Church.

13. Lastly in this Glory Christ intercedeth for us, and is our High-priest in the Heavens with God, living for ever, procuring and conveying to us the Mercies which we need upon the account of his Sacrifice: Ruling his Church, and preserving them; succeeding his Cause, and Servants; restraining and subduing his Enemies and ours; and will perfect his work at the

the day of his Coming to Judgement. So much of the works of Christ.

4. The fourth point to be understood concerning our Redemption, is, *The Nature and worth of the benefits that are procured for us.* Which though you may gather much from what is said, and the full handling of them would be a larger work than is suitable to my present Ends, yet such a brief recital I shall here give you as my Ends require.

In General, we have all from Jesus the Mediator that is worth the having; even all the blessings of this present life, and of the life to come. As we lost our Right to all by sin, so we have our restored Right by Christ alone, who came to destroy sin, and its effects. Had not he interposed we might have had materially life, and natural faculties, and other things which now are Mercies; but not as *Mercies*, but as the requisites to our deserved punishment: Even as the Devils have their Being, and natural perfections to sustain them in their sufferings. Nature it self, so far as Good, and all Natural blessings, are now of Grace: And that not only of such Grace as they were to *Adam*, which was *Mercy without proper Merit*, but of Gospel Grace procured by Christ; which is *Mercy contrary to Merit*. It is no sounder Doctrine to say, that God doth without the Merit of his Son bestow our common forfeited Mercies, either on the Elect, or others, than that he giveth us his Saving grace without it. As all things are delivered into the hands of Christ, *John 13. 3.* So none can receive any good but from his hands. To give Mercies to men that forfeit them, and deserve misery, is so far to pardon their sin; for to remit the sin, is to remit the punishment: But the Scripture is not acquainted with any

any pardon of sin, but what is on the account of the Merits of Christ. They that deny this Mercy of God, in giving even to the ungodly such a measure of forgiveness, do speak against the daily, and hourly experience of all the world; and therefore need no other confutation.

More particularly. 1. Christ having taken the Humane Nature into Union with the Divine, our nature is thereby unconceivably advanced, and brought nigh to God.

2. Having fulfilled the Law, and offered himself a Sacrifice for sin, Gods Justice, and Wisdom, and Holiness, and Goodness, is admirably Demonstrated: And this *Sacrifice* is both Satisfactory, and meritorious, on our behalf, *Heb. 1. 3.* *2 Cor. 5. 19.* *Heb. 9. 26.* and *10. 12.*

3. The world, and the Devil, and Death, and the Grave, are conquered by him; in preparation to our conquest.

4. The Lord Jesus himself being risen, and Justified, hath received all *Power* in Heaven and Earth, *Matth. 28. 19.* and is enabled to do all things that are necessary for his further ends. As the Redeemer he is become Lord of our selves, and of all we have; and he is made the Sovereign Ruler of all, having full Power to relax the Law that cursed us, and to deal with the world on terms of Grace.

5. Accordingly he hath kept off the stroke of the rigorous Justice of God, and hindered the strict execution of the Law of works, and giveth still abundance of forfeited Mercies to the sinful world, keeping them from deserved torments, while he is treating with them on terms of life.

6. He hath made an universal deed of gift, of Christ, and Life to all the world, on Condition that they will but

Accept

Accept the offer, *1 John 5.10, 11, 12. John 1.11, 12. & 3.16, 17, 18, 19.* In this Testament, or Promise, or Act of Oblivion, the sins of all the world are conditionally pardoned, and they are conditionally Justified, and Reconciled to God.

7. He hath given Apostles, Evangelists, Pastors, and Teachers, to proclaim this Act of Grace to the world, commanding them to go into all the world, and preach this Gospel to *every Creature*, and promise Salvation to all that by Faith will become his true Disciples, *Mark 16. 16. Matth. 28. 20, 22.* So that their commission also for the promulgation is universal.

8. Though his servants have most lamentably neglected their duty, and have not gone abroad the world, to divulge the Gospel according to his Will; imagining that this work had been proper to Apostles; and though the Nations have sinfully neglected a due enquiry after this blessed Light, yet hath he not left himself among them without withnells, but hath given them some dawning of the day, or some moon light in the reflections of Evangelical Truth, who have not seen the Sun it self: Much Mercy they have had, notwithstanding their transgressions; and while they served Devils, they have been provided for by God, *in whom they live, and move, and be: doing them good, and giving them rain from Heaven, and fruitful seasons, filling their hearts with Food and gladness; and this to teach them, that they should seek the Lord, if happily they might feel after him, and find him, though he be not far from every one of them, Acts 14.17. & 17.27, 28.* And that which may be known of God, is manifest among them, for God hath shewed it to them; for the invisible things of him from the Creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal Power, and Godhead: so that they are without excuse, *Rom. 1. 19, 20.* By experience

experiences they may find, that God dealeth not now in rigor of Justice, but on terms of Grace, and that sin is not now unpardonable: and they should know that the *Goodness of God leadeth them to repentance*, Rom. 2. 4.

9. As the Gospel conditionally pardoneth all their sins, and offereth them Everlasting life, so it containeth the clearest Reasons, and most effectual motives, to perswade them to Accept the offer. It affordeth them most excellent precepts and instructions, and exhortations, and other helps to bring them to a willingness, that Salvation may be theirs.

10. To which also is added abundance of outward providential helps, to further the working of the Gospel; as seasonable afflictions and Mercies of divers sorts.

11. And with these is usually concurrent some inward motions, and assistance of the Holy Ghost; as knocking at the door, where he is not yet let in, and entertained.

12. And by their presence in the visible Church, even the ungodly have many benefits in the Ordinances, and instructions, and examples of the Saints. All these (besides a Resurrection) are common effects of General redemption, and not appropriated to the Elect.

Besides which there are others that the Elect only do receive. As 1. God is pleased by effectual Grace to draw them to his Son, and make the Gospel successful to their Conversion, insuperably teaching, and changing them by his Spirit, and causing them to Repent, and believe in Christ, and to perform the Conditions of his forementioned Promises. That Love that brought the Lord on Earth, that cloathed him with flesh, that lifted him up upon the Cross, doth stream forth in his season into the Hearts of his Elect, and toucheth them with a changing Power, and winneth them to his Father, and

and himself, and droppeth into them those Heavenly Principles, which will grow up in them to Everlasting Life.

2. Hereupon the Soul believing in Christ is United to him, as a Member of his Body, even of his true Catholick Church ; and Christ is become the Head, the Husband, the Lord, the Saviour of that Soul in a special sort: Christ himself is first given to us in these *Relations*; and from him as our Head, his following benefits are conveyed. *He that hath the Son hath life, and he that hath not the Son hath not life*, for this *Life is in the Son*, Joh. 5. 11, 12. He is the *Vine*, and we are the *Branches*, and out of him we can do nothing, Joh. 15. 1, 2, 5. As it was not we that purchased our own Salvation, so it is not we, but Christ that must have the keeping, and dispensing of the purchased benefits. For it pleased the Father, that in him should all fulness dwell, and that he should be the Head over all things to his Church, that it might by communication become his fulness, Coli 1. 19. Ephes. 1. 22, 23. He is our Treasury, and from him we must have our continual supplies : For with him the Father will give us all things, Röm. 8. 32. And thus Christ will dwell in our hearts by faith, Eph. 3. 17. And set up the Kingdom of God within us.

3. Hereupon we have the pardon of all our sins, not only as to the temporal punishment, nor only as to the bestowing of temporal Mercies, or common helps of Creatures, and Providences ; for this is but a *winking at the dayes of our ignorance* (Acts 17. 30.) in comparison of the Pardon which afterward we receive. Nor is it only a Conditional, or Offered pardon ; but it is an Actual Remission of the *Eternal*, and of *all the destructive Punishment*. And thus we are Justified from all that might be charged on us from the Law, and accepted, and used as just by God. There is a kind of for-

giveness that was promised to the sacrificers, *Lev. 4. 20, 26, 9. 1, 35. & 5. 10, 13, 16, 18. & 6. 7. Numb. 15. 28.* But as that was upon Christs account, so it extended not to the pardon of the eternal Punishment to any but true Believers. He that was once Crucified, is exalted by Gods right hand, a Prince, and a Saviour, to give Repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins, *Acts 5. 31.* Through this man is preached the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things, from which they could not be justified by the Law of Moses, *Acts 13. 38, 39.* When our eyes are open, and we are turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, we then receive Remission of our sins, *Acts 26. 18.* When we are delivered from the power of darkness, and translated into the Kingdom of Christ: in him we have then Redemption through his Blood, even the forgiveness of sins, *Col. 1. 13, 14.* And blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered, to whom the Lord imputeth not sin, *Rom. 4. 7.* And now who shall condemn us? It is God that justifieth us: for there is no Condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus, that walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, *Rom. 8. 1, 33, 34.*

4. With this benefit doth concur, our Reconciliation to God, and our Adoption; by which we are made his Sons, and God is pleased to own us as our Father. For being one with Christ the Son of God, we are Sons by him. For to as many as receive him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his Name, *John 1. 12.* This is the wonderful Love that the Father hath bestowed on those that were his Enemies; that they should not only be reconciled to him by the death of his Son, but also be called the Sons of God, *Rom. 5. 10. 1 John 3. 1.* For he hath chosen us in him, before the foundation of the world, that we should be Holy, and

and without blame before him in love ; having predestinated us to the Adoption of Children, by Jesus Christ to himself, according to the good pleasure of his Will, to the praise of the Glory of his grace, wherein he hath made us accepted in the beloved; Ephes. 1. 4, 5, 6: O what an unspeakable Mercy is it to have the blessed God, whom we had so oft offended, to become our Reconciled Father in Christ ! For it is not an empty title that he assumeth ; but he hath more abundant love to us, and tenderness of our welfare, than any title can make us understand:

5. And hereupon it doth immediately follow, that we have a right to the blessed *Inheritance* of his Sons, and are certain *Heirs* of his Heavenly Kingdom, Colos. 1. 12: For if Sons, then Heirs, Heirs of God, and Joint Heirs with Christ, Rom. 8. 17. Being saved by the washing of Regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, and justified by Grace through Christ, we are made Heirs, according to the hope of Eternal Life, Tit. 3. 5, 6, 7: Being begotten again to a lively hope, by the Resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an Inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in Heaven for us, 1 Pet. 1. 3, 4.

6. Withall the Holy Ghost is given to us, not only to close us at first with Christ, but to take up his abode in us as his temples, and to be the Agent, and Life of Christ within us, and to do his work, and maintain his Interest, and cleanse us of all filthiness of flesh and Spirit, and sanctifie us throughout, and to strive against, and conquer the flesh, and to keep us by Divine Power through Faith unto salvation, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Gal. 5. 17, 22: 2 Cor. 6. 1. 1 Pet. 1. 5. For because we are Sons, God sendeth forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, whereby we cry Abba, Father, Gal. 4. 6. This spirit of Adoption which we receive doth bear witness with our spirits, that we are the Sons of God, Rom. 8. 15, 16:

For if any man have not the spirit of Christ, the same is none of his, Rom. 8. 9. By this Spirit is the spirit of the world cast out of us ; the spirit of pride, and of blindness, and of delusion, and hard-heartedness, and of sensuality, and malice, and hypocrisy, are cast out. By this is Gods Image imprinted on our Souls ; we are conformed to his blessed Will ; we are made partakers of the Divine Nature, being Holy, as God is Holy, Colos. 3. 10. 2 Pet. 1. 4. 1 Pet. 1. 16. Hereby we are delivered from the thraldom of sin, and the slavery of the Devil ; and the seduction of the world, and our treacherous Flesh. Hereby also we are fitted for the service of God, to which before we were undisposed and unfit. O what an ease is it to the Soul, to be free from so much of the burden of sin ? What an honour is it to have the Spirit of God within us, and to have a nature so truly Heavenly and Divine ? How can it go ill with him that hath God dwelling in him, and that dwells in God ? 1. Joh. 4. 15.

7. Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, that we shall be actually employed in the special and nearest service of God, that on earth is to be performed. Let diseased souls desire idleness, and swinish sinners take pleasure in the mire, and feed like ravenous beasts on carrion, or as dogs on dung : but the Saints will ever rejoice in God, and take it for the most blessed life on Earth, when they can but do him the greatest Service. Let his Enemies that hate his Service, be weary of it, as if it were a toil or drudgery ; but his Children will desire no sweet-er work : they never think themselves so well as when they are most serviceable to their blessed Lord, though at the greatest cost and labour to the flesh. So sweet is Gods service, that the more of it we can do, the more is our pleasure, and honour, and content. Other work spendeth strength, but this increaseth it : other work must have recreation intermixt, but this is it self the most delightful

delightful recreation : other service is undertaken for the love of the wages ; but this is undertaken for the love of the Master, and the work, and is wages it self, to them that go through with it. For other service is but a means, and that to some inferiour end ; but this is a means to the Everlasting Perfection, and Blessedness of the Soul ; and such a means as containeth, or Presently procureth somewhat of the end. All the Saints are even here *a chosen Generation, a royal Priesthood, an holy Nation, a peculiar People, that they should shew forth the praises of him that hath called them out of darkness, into his marvelous light : they are an holy Priesthood, to offer up a spiritual Sacrifice, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ, 1 Pet. 2. 5, 9.* Their very bodies are *a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, in their reasonable service.* What a sweet work is it to live in the daily Love of God ? in his praises ; in the hopes, and sweet fore-thoughts of everlasting joyes : The world affordeth not such a Master, nor such a Work.

8. Another of the precious benefits by Christ is, *The liberty of access in all our wants to God by Prayer, with a promise to be heard.* The flaming sword did keep the way to the tree of life, till Christ had taken it down, and consecrated for us a new and living way, through the Vail, which is his flesh : and now we have boldness to enter into the holiest, by the blood of Jesus : and therefore may draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, Heb. 10. 19, 20, 22. When worldlings may cry to their Baal in vain, the Righteous cry, and the Lord beareth them, and delivereth them out of all their (hurtful) troubles. O what a Mercy is it in our falls, in our distresses, in our dangers, in our wants, to have a God, a faithful merciful Father to go to, and make our moan to for relief ? What a Mercy is it, when our flesh and our hearts do fail us, when friends and worldly things all

fail us, to have God for the *Rock* of our hearts, and our *Portion*? Psal. 73. 26, When sickness begins to break these bodies, and earthly delights do all forsake us, and death calls us to come to our endless state, then to have a Reconciled Father to go to, and crave his aid, upon the encouragement of a promise, and recommend our souls into his hand as to a faithful Creator, and our surest dearest friend: this is a Mercy that no man can well value, till they come to use it. To know every day, that as oft as ever we come to God, we are alwayes welcome; and that our persons, and prayers are pleasing to him through his Son; what a Mercy is it? One would think we should liye joyfully, if we had but one such promise as this for faith to live upon: *Call upon me in the day of trouble, and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorifie me, Psal. 50, 15. Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son, Joh. 14:13, 14.* No wonder if they be rich, that have so free acces to such a treasure; and if they be safe that have access to so sure a help. For God is a very present help in trouble, *Psal. 46. 1.*

9. Another precious benefit is, that we have *Peace of Conscience, or ground for it at the least, in our Peace with God: and so may come to assurance of Salvation, and may partake of the Joy in the Holy Ghost:* For in this peace and Joy the Kingdom of God doth much consist. When the chief cause of all our fear and sorrow is done away, what then is left to break our Peace? When we have no cause to fear the flames of Hell, nor the sting of death, or the appearance of our Judge, any further than to move us to make ready, what then should greatly trouble the Soul? If God and Heauen be not matter of comfort, I know not what is. If we saw a man, that had got many Kingdoms, to be still sad, and ~~dumpish~~ because he had no more; we would say, he were very ambitious,

ambitious, or covetous : and yet he might have reason for it : But if you have the Love of God, and a title by promise to the Heavenly Inheritance, and yet you are discontented, and God, and Glory is not enough for you, that is most unreasonable.

10. Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, Our Spiritual Communion with his Church, and holy members. We do not only joyn with them in outward Communion, but we unite our desires, and there is an harmony of affections. We are in the main of one Mind, and Will, and Way : and we joynly constitute the Body of our Lord : *We are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the City of the Living God, the Heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of Angels, to the general Assembly, and Church of the first born, which are written in Heaven, and to God the judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new Covenant*, Heb. 12. 22, 23, 24. We are joyned to that Body, and have Communion with it, which consisteth both of militant, and triumphant Saints, and of the Angels also. *We are no more strangers and foreigners, but fellow-Citizens with the Saints, and of the household of God, and are built on the foundation of the Apostles, and Prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone ; in whom all the building fitly framed together, groweth unto an Holy Temple in the Lord ; in whom we also are builded together for an habitation of God, through the Spirit*, Ephes. 2. 19, 20, 21, 22. And as in holy concord we serve the Lord, having one God, one Christ, one Spirit, one Faith, one Baptism, one Rule, the Word of God, one mind, one heart, one work of Holiness and Righteousness in the main ; one hope, one Heaven, the place of our expectations : so have we the fruit of the Prayers of each other, and of all the Church, and have the honour, the safety, and other benefits of being members of so blessed a Society.

Yea we have in this Communion, the whole Church obliged, and disposed according to their capacity to endeavour the good of every member, So that Ministers, and Magistrates, yea though they were Apostles, and Prophets, *Paul, or Apollos, all are ours, 1 Cor. 3.22.* Kings have their *Power for us*: Ministers have their *Gifts for us*: and for us they must use them. If we suffer, every member must be as forward to assist us, and if we want, to relieve us according to their power, as if they suffered with us, *1 Cor. 12. 25, 26.*

Yea the Angels are our *Brethren (Rev. 22. 9.)* and fellow-servants, yea ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them that shall be *Heirs of Salvation, Heb. 1. 14.* To encamp about them, and to bear them in their arms, rejoicing to behold their graces, and prosperity, as was shewed before.

11. Another of our precious benefits by Christ is, that *All things shall work together for our good, Rom. 8. 28.* When we are Sanctified to God, all things are Sanctified to us, to serve us for God, and help us to him. Every Creature that we have to do with, is as it were another thing to the Saints, than to other men. They are all wheels in that universal Engine of Grace, to carry us to Salvation. The same things that are common Mercies to others, are special to us, as proceeding from a special Love, and being designed to a special use. As *flesh-pleasing* is the ultimate end of the ungodly, and all things are thereby debased, to be but means to that ignoble end: So the *Pleasing and fruition of God*, is the End of all the Saints, and thereby all things that they have to do with, are advanced to the honour of being Sanctified means to this most high and noble End: and as they are engaged to use them to this End, and consequently to their own greatest advantage: so God hath engaged himself to bless them in that holy use, and to cause them all by his gracious

ous providence to cooperate to their good. The greatest afflictions, the cruellest persecutions from the most violent enemies, our wants, our weaknesses, and death it self, all must concur to carry on this work. What then shoule a Christian fear, but sin? How honourable, and how safe, and how happy a life may he live, that hath all these assured for his service? And what causeless fears are they that use to afflict the Servants of God, concerning their outward troubles and necessities? What do we fear, and groan under, and complain of, but our Fathers physick, and the means of our Salvation? If this one Truth were but believed, and received, and used according to its worth, O what a life would Christians live!

12. The last, and greatest of our benefits by Christ is, *Our Resurrection, and our Justification at the bar of God, and our reception into Glory.* This is the end of all, and therefore containeth all. For this Christ died; for this we are Christians: for this we believe, hope, and labour; for this we suffer, and deny our selves and renounce this world. Our bodies shall then be spiritual and glorious, no more troubled with infirmities, diseases, or necessities. Our souls shall be both naturally and graciously perfected; both in their faculties and qualities. We shall be brought nigh to God: We shall be numbered with the Inhabitants of the Heavenly *Jerusalem*, and be members of that blessed Society, and be companions, and equal with the Angels of God: we shall for ever behold our Glorified Redeemer, and see our own Nature united to the Godhead; and we shall have the greatest and nearest intuition and fruition of God, the fullest Love to him, and the sweetest Rest, content, and delight in him, that our created Natures are capable of: We shall everlastinglly be employed in this Love, and Delight, and in his Praises with all the

Heavenly

Heavenly Host : And the Glory of God will shine forth in our Glory, and the abundance of his Goodness will be communicated to us ; and he will be well-pleased with us, with our praises, with all that blessed Society, and with our Head : and this will endure to all Eternity.

Christians, I have now named in a few words, those Benefits by Christ, which the heart of man is not able to value, in any proportion to their unexpressible worth ; I have named that in an hour, which you will enjoy for ever. So much of our Benefits by Christ.

5. The fifth point to be understood, in the right Knowledge of Christ, is, *The terms on which he conveyeth his Benefits to men, and how we must be made partakers of them.*

And these Mercies are of two sorts ; 1. *Common.* 2. *Proper* to them that are Heirs of Salvation. The *Common* are, 1. Those discoveries of Grace, that are made even to *Heathens* in the *Creatures, and the merciful Providences* of God. These are *Absolutely* and freely bestowed in some measure on all, but in a greater measure upon some, as pleases the Giver. 2. The *Supernatural, or Instituted* means of Revealing Christ, and Life to the world, and drawing them to a saving consent of Faith. These are the *Gospel* written and preached, with other concomitant helps. The Commission Christ hath given to his *Embassadors*, is to preach this *Gospel* to all the world, even to every (reasonable) *Creature*, without exception, or restriction. And it is *Absolutely* and freely given, where it is given. But as to the providential disposal of the event, God causeth it not to be sent to all, but to whom he seeth meet,

2. The Proper or Special Mercies are of two sorts.
1. Some are *Physical inherent qualities*, or performed acts : 2, And some are *adherent Rights, or Relations*.

Of the former *inherent* sort, there are these three Degrees : 1. There is the first special work of Vocation, Conversion, or Regeneration, causing the sinner to Repent, and believe, and giving him the Principle of Spiritual Life. 2. There is the bestowing of the In-dwelling Spirit of God, and progressive Sanctification of heart, and life, and perseverance with Victory. 3. There is the perfecting of all this, in our Glorious perfection in the life to come,

For the first of these, God hath not promised it Conditionally or Absolutely to any individual person that hath it not, He hath bound all to Repent, and Believe, but hath not promised to make them do it : (only he hath revealed that there are certain persons so given to Christ, as that they shall be infallibly drawn to believe,) But he hath appointed certain means for the ungodly, which they are bound to use in order to their Conversion, and if they will not use them, they are without excuse, If they will, they have very much encouragement from God : both 1. In the Nature of the means, which are fitted to their ends, and are mighty to bring down all oppositions ; and 2. In the Commands, and Institution of God ; whose Wisdom and Goodness may easily resolve us, that he will not appoint us means in vain, nor set his creatures on fruitless labours : And 3. Also from the Issue : for no man can stand forth and say, Such an one did his best in the use of means, and yet could not attain the End, but fell short of the Grace and Glory of God.

The Diseases of mens Souls, are *wilfulness and blindness* : the Means of Cure, are the *Perseverations*, with the

the *Revelations* of the Gospel. Men have the Natural Powers of Understanding and Willing : but they want that right disposition which we call the Habit, or Moral Power, which is no more than to say, *They are habitually Blind and Wilful*. It is so far from being unreasonable to *teach*, and *perswade* men that are under such an Impotency as this, that there is nothing in the world that doth more bespeak our teaching and persuasions : for this is the Natural and Instituted way to cure them, and give them Power. What means of overcoming *Ignorance* like *Teaching* ? and what means of overcoming *Habituated wilfulness*, like *Persuasion*, added to informing truths ? We do not use to reason men out of a *Natural Impotency*, nor to *perswade* them to do that, for which they have no Faculties or Object ; but it is the very means of overcoming a *moral Impotency*, and making men willing of the Good which they rejected. And with this means doth God set in, and infallibly cause it to be effectual with his chosen. Thus no man cometh to the Son, except the Father *draw* him ; and then for the two following Degrees of Holiness in our Sanctification, and Glorious Perfection, God hath promised them to those that have this first Degree. For the *Spirit of Holiness* is promised to all that truly *Repent and Believe*, and *Salvation* to all that are *Sanctified, and persevere*. So that the *Right* to these *Inherent Mercies*, being a *Relation*, is conveyed as other *Rights, and Relations*, of which we are next to speak.

2. As the *Spirit* by the Operation of the Word upon the heart conveyeth the foresaid *Inherent* benefits or qualities and acts, so the promise of Grace, indited by Christ and the *Spirit*, doth as a *Deed of Gift*, or *Testament*, or *act of Oblivion*, bestow on us our *Rights, and Spiritual Relations* ; and from these they do result, as the immediate instrumental Cause, Thus

Thus doth he give Power or Right to as many as receive him, to become the Sons of God, *John 1. 12.* Thus doth he give us Pardon, Justification, Adoption, and our Right to further Grace and Glory. And these Promises are Conditional; and our Repenting and Believing in Christ, is the Condition. And therefore till Conversion do bring us to Repent and Believe, we have no Right to any of these benefits of the Promise. And therefore though our Repentance and Faith be none of the *Proper Cause* of our Justification, or Right; yet the main work, in order to our procurement of these benefits that is now to be done, is to perswade the sinner to Repent and Believe; to turn that he may live; for Gods Act of Grace is past already, and the Conditional Pardon is granted long ago, and will effectually pardon us as soon as we perform the Condition, and not before. Till then, we hinder the Efficacy of the Deed of Gift: for Unbelief and Impenitency are true *Causes* of mens *Condemnation*, though Faith and Repentance be not *Proper Causes* of their *Salvation*.

These Promises being Conditional, we cannot be assured of our part in the benefits, but by being assured that we perform the Condition. By this you may see the Nature of presumption, when men say, they believe that which never was promised, or believe that they have right to the blessings that are promised to others, and not to them; or believe that they shall have the benefits promised, when they perform not the Conditions; all this is presuming, and not true believing. If men believe that God is reconciled to them, and will pardon them, and justify them, and save them, when they are unconverted, impenitent, unregenerate men; this is not indeed a believing of God, that hath never made them any such promise, nor ever told them any such matter, but the

contrary:

contrary ; but it is a believing the false delusions of the Devil and their own hearts. He that will claim any title to Christ and Pardon, and Salvation, must have something to shew for it ; yea and something more than the most of the world have to shew ; for the most shall be shut out. Every man therefore that regardeth his Salvation, must seriously ask his Soul this question, *What have I to shew for my title to Salvation, more than the most of the world can shew ? It is not saying, I hope to be saved, that will serve the turn, except I can give a Reason of my hopes. Thousands that lay claim to Salvation shall miss of it, because they have no title to it.* And that which you must have to shew is this ; A Promise, or *Deed of Gift* on Gods part, and the *fulfilling of the Condition* on your part. God saith to all men, *Whoever Repenteth, Believeth, or is converted, shall be saved.* When you have found that you repent of all your sins, and truly believe, and are converted to God, then, and not till then, you may conclude that you shall be saved.

6. The sixth Point to be understood, or believed, concerning these Benefits of Christ, is, the infallible Certainty of them. While men look on the promised Glory to come as on an uncertain thing, they will hardly be drawn to venture, and let go the profits, and pleasures of the world to attain it ; much less to part with life it self. The life of all our Christian motion, is the unfeigned belief of the Truth of Gods Word, and specially of the unseen things of the world to come. Such as mens belief of Heaven and Hell is, such will be the bent of their hearts, and the course of their lives, and such they will be in yielding to sin, or in resisting it, and in all the service they do for God. As all men would take another course, if they did but see Heaven and Hell with their eyes ;

eyes; so all men would presently throw away their worldly fleshly pleasures, and turn to God, and an holy life, if they did but as thoroughly believe the Joyes and torments to come, as if they saw them. Flesh and blood can hardly judge of things, without the help of sense; and fleshly men take all things to be fantasms or nothings, that are not within the judgement of their senses. They must see it, or feel it, or taste it, or hear it; and Believing is a way that hardly satisfies them; though it be God himself that they are to believe. Believing is trusting the Credit of another: and we are naturally loth to trust to any, but our eyes or other senses. We are so false our selves, that we are ready to measure God by our selves, and to think that he is a deceiver, because that we are such. And hence it is that the world is so ungodly, that they venture on sin, and will not be at the cost and labour of a Heavenly life; because they take the matters of the life to come, to be but uncertainties, and have not so true a belief of them, as might possess them with a deep apprehension of their reality. How should the Word profit them, that mix it not with Faith, *Heb. 4. 2.* unless by begetting Faith it self? O what a change would a sound belief of the Scriptures make in the world! But having spoken so oft of this in other writings, I shall say no more of it now. So much of the Knowledge of Christ.

II. I have shewed you the first part of this Direction, *How Christ must be Received understandingly.* I now come to the second, which is, that *He must be received heartily.* As God must be loved, so Christ must be believed in, with all the heart, and soul, and strength: if not with All in a *Perfect* degree, (for that will not be till we come to Heaven) yet with *All* in a predominant prevalent degree.

degree: There are many convictions, and good meanings, and wishes, and purposes, which may proceed from common Grace, and be found in those that never shall be saved: These may be called (analogically) Faith, and Love, and Desire, as those are that are found in the truly Regenerate; and yet the persons in whom they are found, may not fitly be called Believers, or Lovers of God, because a man is to be denominated from that in him which is predominant, and hath the chief power on his heart. The Soul of man is not so simple as to move but one way: Its state in this life is to stand between two differing Competitors. God and the world, Spirit and flesh; and there is no man that is totally given up to either of them. No man is so good, and spiritual, that hath not something in him that is bad and carnal: And no man is so fully addicted to God, but the Creature hath too much interest in his heart. Nor is there any man so given up to the Creature, in whom God hath no manner of interest at all, in his Estimation, and Affections; if he indeed believe that there is a God. At least it is not so with all that are unconverted. Otherwise, 1. What is it that common Grace doth, if it no whit dispose them towards God? Certainly it would not else be Grace. 2. And if this were not so, then we must say, that no unregenerate man hath any Good in him, that is truly Moral: For if there be no interest of God in his mind or will, there can be no Good in him. But this is contrary to Scripture, and experience. It was undoubtedly some Moral Good, which Christ loved the man for, in *Mark 10. 21.* who was not far from the Kingdom of God. 3. Otherwise all men must be equally departed from God, which is contrary to experience. 4. Yea, all men must be as bad on Earth (privately) as in Hell; which certainly is false. I may well say, that on Earth there is some Good in the worst;

worst ; much more in those that are almost perswaded to be converted Christians. Many a thought of the Goodnes of God and the necessity of a Saviour, and of the Love of Christ , and of the Joys of Heaven, may be stirring and working in the minds of the unsanctified ; but if they take not up the Heart for Christ , the person is not a true Believer. As the Gospel must be Believed to be True , so Christ that is offered us in the Gospel *as Good* , must be Heartily , and thankfully accepted accordingly : And the Glory , the Justification , Reconciliation with God , and other benefits procured by him , and offered with him , must be valued , and desired above all earthly fleshly things. If you are convinced that sin is evil , as contrary to God , and hurtful to you , and hereupon have some mind to let it go , and some wishes that Christ would save you from it , and yet still have a Love to it that is greater than your dislike , and the bent of your heart is more for it , than against it , and your habituate Desires are rather to keep than to leave it : this is not Sanctification , nor a saving consent to be saved by Christ. If you have some convictions that Holiness is good , as being the Image of God , and pleasing to him , and necessary to your Salvation , and so should have some mind of Holiness on the grounds ; yet if you have on the other side a greater aversenes to it , because it would deprive you of the pleasures of your sin , and the Habitual inclination of your will is more against it than for it : certainly this will not stand with true Sanctification , of Faith in Christ , to save you from the power of sin by his Spirit. Thousands deceive themselves , by misunderstanding some common passages , that are spoken to comfort afflicted Consciences ; viz. *That the least true desires after Grace, do prove the Soul to be Gracius.* This is True, if you speak of the least Desires , which are Predominant in the Soul ; when

our *Desire* is more habitually than our *unwillingness*, and we thus prefer Christ before all the world, the least of this is an Evidence of Saving Grace. But such Desires as are subdued by the contrary Desires : and such a will as is accompanied with a greater unwillingness, habitually ; and such a Faith, as is drowned in greater unbelief ; these are not Evidences of a saving change : nor can you justly gather any special comfort from them. He that hath more unbelief than Belief, is not to be called a Believer, but an unbeliever : And he that hath more hatred, or dislike of God and Holiness than Love to them, is not to be called Godly, but ungodly, nor a Lover of God, but a hater of him. I am easily persuaded, that many of you that are ungodly could be contented that God be Glorified, if his Glory do not cross your carnal interest, and so you desire Gods Glory even for it self, as that which is absolutely Good in it self : But if your fleshly interest be so dear to you, that you will sacrifice Gods Glory to it, and had rather God were dishonoured, than your fleshly interest contradicted, it is your flesh then that is made your God, and your chief End. It is not every wish, or mind of Christ, no not to save you from sin as sin, that will prove you true Believers : Nor is it every minding of God, or love to him, no not as one apprehended by you to be the chiefest Good, and desirable for himself, as your End, that will prove indeed that you savingly love him ; as long as the contrary mind and will is Habitually predominant in you. Such as the very habit and bent of a mans heart is, such indeed is the man. Its possible for a man, even a good man, to have two contrary ends, and intentions ; yea ultimate ends ; as that which is desired for it self, and referred to nothing else, is called *Ultimate* : but it is not possible for him, to have two *principal predominant* Ends. So far as we are carnal still,

still, we make the pleasing of our flesh our ultimate End : For doubtless we do not sin only by pleasing the flesh , as *a means to Gods Glory* ; nor only in the mis-choosing of other means : But yet this is none of our *Principal* End , so far as men are truly Sanctified. And because that is called a mans mind , or will , which is the chiefest , and highest in his mind and will ; therefore we use to denominate men from that only which beareth rule in them : And thus we may say with *Paul* , *It is not I , but sin that dwelleth in me.* For a disowned act that proceedeth from us , against the bent and habit of our wills , and the course of our lives , from the remnants of a carnal misguided will , is not it that must denominate the person , nor is so fully ours as the contrary act. And therefore though indeed we sinfully participate of it : yet when the question is , whether Believing , or unbelief , sinning or obeying , be *my work* ; it is not Comparatively to be called *mine* , which I am much more against than for. So on the other side , if the unsanctified have some transient , superficial , uneffectual acts of Desire , or Faith , or Love to God , which are contrary to the bent and habit of their hearts , this is not *theirs* , nor imputable to them , so far as hence to give them their Denomination. It is not *they* that do it , but the common workings of the Spirit upon them.

If ever then you would be assured that you are Christians , look to the *Habitual bent* of your hearts , and see that you do not only talk of Scripture , and slightly believe it , and speak well of Christ , with some good wishes , and meanings , and purposes ; but , as you love your Souls , see that Christ be Received as your dearest Saviour , with Thankfulness , and greatest Love , and as your Sovereign Lord , with true subjection ; and that he have your Superlative estimation and Affections , and all things in the world be put under him in your

Souls. This must be so, if you will have the portion of Believers. No Faith that is short of this, will prove you Christ's Disciples indeed, or Heirs of the Promises made to Believers. The voice of Christ that calls to you in the Gospel, is, *My son, give me thy heart*, Prov. 33. 26. Do what thou wilt in ways of duty, and think as highly as thou wilt of thy self, thou art no true Believer in Christ's account, till thou hast given him thy heart. If he have thy tongue, if he have thy good opinion; nay if thy body were burnt in his Cause, if he had not thy *Love*, thy *Heart*, it were as nothing, 1 Cor. 13. 3. For thy works, and sufferings, are so far acceptable (through Christ) as they are Testimonies of this, that Christ hath thy heart. If he have not thy heart, he takes it as if he had nothing: And if he have this, he takes it as if he had all. For this is not only preferred by him before all; but also he knows that this commandeth all. If Christ have thy *Heart*, the Devil will not have thy tongue, and life; the Ale-house, or a Harlot will not have thy body; nor the world will not have the principal part of thy life. If Christ have thy *Heart*, it will be heard much in thy conference; it will be seen in thy labours. For that which hath a mans *Heart* will hardly be hid, unles he purposely hide it, which a Christian neither can, nor ought to do. It would make a man wonder to hear some wretches, that will run from God as fast as they can, and yet face you down that God hath their hearts: that have no mind, so much as to meditate, or talk of Christ, or his precious Blood, or mysterious Redemption, or the glorious Kingdom purchased by him; that will be at neither cost nor labour in his Service, and yet profess that Christ hath their hearts: that will refuse an Holy Heavenly life, and perhaps make a scorn of it, and maliciously prate against the Sanctified, and yet will stand

to it that the Holy Ghost, the Sanctifier of the Elect, hath their hearts. No wonder if those hearts are ill-managed, and in a miserable deceived state, that are so unacquainted with themselves.

Faith entreth at the Understanding, but it hath not all its essential parts, and is not the Gospel-faith indeed, till it have possessed the will. The *heart* of Faith is wanting, till Faith hath taken possession of the heart. For by *Faith* Christ dwelleth in the *heart*, Ephes. 3. 17. And if he dwell not in the *heart*, he dwells not in the *Man*, in a saving sort. He had some interest in *Judas*, *Simon Magus*, *Ananias*, and *Sapphira*, as to the *head*, and perhaps somewhat more in a superficial sort. But Satan entred into the *heart* of one, and filled the *heart* of another of them with a lie, and the *heart* of the third was not *right in the sight of God*, and therefore he had no part or lot in Christ, but was still in the gall of bitterness, and bond of iniquity: and all because Christ was not heartily entertained, *Acts* 5. 3. & 8. 22, 23. It is in the *heart* that the world must have its rooting, or else it will wither in time of tryal. It is seeking with the *whole heart* that is the evidence of the blessed, *Psal.* 119. 2. And it is a *feigned turning* when men turn not to God with the *whole heart*, *Jer.* 3. 10. This is Gods promise concerning his Elect; *I will give them a heart to know me that I am the Lord, and they shall be my people, and I will be their God: for they shall return unto me with their whole heart*, *Jer.* 24. 7. See then that the *heart* be unspeckedly delivered up to Christ: for if Christ have it not, the flesh, the world, and the Devil will have it. Your Hearts must be a dwelling for one of the Masters; choose you whether.

It is the damnation of most professed Christians, that they have nothing for Christ but a good opinion, or a few good words, or outside services, or some sleight Religiousness.

ligiousness on the by, when the flesh and the world go away with their hearts, and yet they will not know it, nor confess it. Christ will not be an underling or servant to your flesh. Your Hearts he hath bought, and your Hearts he will have; or you are none of his, If he shall have nothing from you but a *name*, you shall have nothing but the name of his purchased Salvation.

III. The last part of the Direction yet remains, *viz.* that *you must close with Christ entirely, as well as Under-standingly and Heartily.* It is *whole Christ* that must be received with the whole heart.

For the understanding of this, it must be known, both *How* and *Why* Christ is offered to us.

As he came into the world to destroy the works of the Devil, *1 John 3. 8.* and to *seek and save* that which was lost, *Luke 19. 19.* and by his Mediation to reconcile us to God, and bring us up to Glory; so two things were to be done, for the accomplishment of this: first he was himself to Merit our Salvation, and pay the price of our Redemption on the Cross, and in his own person to conquer the world, the Devil, and death, and the grave; and then he was by his Intercession in the Heavens to make application of this, and bestow the benefits thus purchased by him. And because it was he, and not we that made the purchase, it therefore pleased the Father, that the purchased treasure should be put into his hands, and not immediately put into ours. He is become our Treasury, and authorized to be our Head: All Power is given him in Heaven, and Earth. We have so foully miscarryed already, that he will no more trust his honour in our hands, as at first he did. We shall have nothing of Pardon, or Grace, or Glory, but what we have in and from the Son, *God hath given us Eternal Life,*

Life, and this Life is in his Son: He that hath the Son hath Life; and he that hath not the Son, hath not Life,
1 John 11. 12. It is not only the Nature and Person of Christ that is to be believed in; but it is the Person, as impowered to certain ends, and clothed with his Office, that we must now entertain. Now the Office of Christ being for our Salvation, and the Glory of God, is suited to these happy ends.

And our Necessities are principally in these three points. 1. We have the Guilt of sin upon us to be pardoned, and the Wrath of God, and Curse of the Law, and the punishment of sin to be removed. 2. We have the corruption of our Nature to be healed; the power of sin to be destroyed; the Image of God repaired on us; and our hearts and lives to be acted, and ordered according to the Will of God; and to these ends, Temptations to be conquered; and our Souls directed, strengthened, and preserved to the end. 3. We must be raised from the Grave at the last day; we must be Justified in Judgment, and possessed of that Glory which is the End of our Faith. To this Justification, Sanctification, and Glorification may the rest be reduced.

Now the Office of Christ is suited to these Necessities of ours: and as we cannot possibly be saved, unless all these Necessities be supplied, and these works done for us: so we cannot possibly have these things done, but by Accepting of Christ, as Authorized, and impowered by his Office, and Perfections, to do them.

The Glory that God will have by this work, I have before expressed to you at large. He will have his Justice, and Wisdom, and Power, and Holiness, and Mercy to be demonstrated and honoured by Christ. And therefore Christ hath resolved to give out none of his benefits, but in such manner, and ways as may best attain these highest Ends.

These several points therefore I must intreat you here to note distinctly. 1. That you must be brought into a special Relation to the *Person of Christ*, as cloathed with his *Office*, before you can lay claim to his *Saving Benefits*. He is the Head, and you must become his Members: He is the Husband of the Church, and you must become his Spouse; and so of the rest. This is called our *Uniting to Christ*, which must go before our further Communion with him. It is the Will of God, that you shall never receive his Benefits without, or before you receive his Son. (except only those Benefits which go before your Union with Christ himself, in order to the accomplishing it; as the Gospel, the gift of Faith to the Elect, &c.) You shall never have actual Pardon, Justification, Adoption, Sanctification, or Glory, till ye have first saving interest in Christ himself. He is the *Vine*, and we are the *Branches*: we must be planted into him, and live in him, or else we can have nothing further from God, nor do nothing acceptable to God. And therefore the first and great work of Faith is to Receive and close with the Person of Christ, as cloathed with his Office.

2. Understand and note, that as you shall not have his great *Benefits* before, or without his *Person*; so God hath resolved that you shall not have his Special *Benefits*, unless you will take them *all together* (I speak of men at age, that are capable of all.) You shall not have Pardon, and Justification, or Glory, without Sanctification; nor the comforts of Christ without the guidance and government of Christ. You must have all, or none.

3. From hence it follows, that therefore you must Receive, and close with Christ Entirely, in his whole *Office*, as he is to accomplish all these works, or else you cannot be United to him. He will not be devided:

you

you shall not have Christ as a Justifier of you, if you will not have him as a Guide, and Ruler, and Sanctifier of you. He will not be a partial Saviour: if you will not consent that he shall save you from your sins, he will not consent to save you from Hell.

4. Understand, and note that Christ will look to his *Fathers Interest, and Honour*, and his *own*, as well as to your Salvation; yea and before it. And therefore you must not hope for any Mercy from him, in any way that is dishonourable to him, or that is inconsistent with his own blessed Ends and Interest. And therefore do not look for any such Grace from him as shall discharge you from your duty, or give you liberty to dishonour or disobey him; nor do not think that you shall have him Related to you only for your own ends, but on terms of highest honour to God, and your Redeemer. And do not think that your Grace is ever the less free, because Gods Honour is thus preferred: for if you are Christians indeed, you will take Gods Interest, as your own highest Interest, and will confess, that you could not have your own Ends, and welfare any other way.

5. Understand and Note also, that as all your Mercies are in the hand of Christ, so Christ hath appointed in his Gospel, a certain way and course of means, in which he will bestow it: And you cannot expect it from him, in any other way but his own. As God hath made Christ the way, and no man cometh to the Father but by him, so Christ hath ordained a standing course of means, which are his way for the making over of his Benefits; and here you must have them, or go without them;

6. Understand and Note, that there are *some* of Christs Ends, and Benefits, that the very *Natural man* desires, and some that *Corrupted Nature* is against.

Now

Now it is therefore the established way of Christ, to Promise us those which we *can desire*, on Condition that we will also *accept of*, and *submit to those that we are against*. Not but that his Grace doth dispose men to the performance of such Conditions: But his Grace worketh by means: and a *Conditional promise* is his established means, to draw mans heart to the *Performance* of the Condition (which well considered, is a sufficient answer to the Argumients that are commonly urged against the *Conditionality* of the Promise.) As the Spirit doth Powerfully work within; so he useth that Word from without, as his Instrument, which worketh ~~Sapientially~~, and Powerfully to the same work. If a Physician have two medicines to give his Patient, as necessary for his cure, the one very sweet, and the other bitter; the one which he loves, and the other which he loathes, he will Promise him the *Sweeter*, if he will take the *Bitter* one; that by the *love* of one, he may prevail against the *loathing* of the other, and may tice it down. He will not promise the *bitter* one which is loathed, and make the Taking of the *sweet* one the Condition: He will not say, *I will give thee this Aloes, on Condition thou wilt take Sugar*: but contrary; *I will give thee the sweeter, if thou wilt take the bitter*.

In Christ's Ends, and Works, 1. We Naturally are more willing of that which makes for our selves directly, than of that which makes directly for the Honour of God and the Redeemer. We prefer our own Ends before Gods Glory: And therefore Christ hath so ordered the Condition of his Promises, that unless we will take him in his Relations of Dignity as King and Lord, and will make the Glory and Pleasing of God our principal End, we shall have none of him, or his Saving Benefits. For he came not to fulfil our selfish desires, but to fetch us off from our selves, and recover us to God, that he might

might have his own. And if we will not have have our All in God, we shall have nothing. 2. And Naturally we are willing, as to our own benefits, to be pardoned, and freed from the Curse of the Law, and the flames of Hell, and Natural death, and punishment: And therefore we are thus far Naturally willing of free Justification. But we are unwilling to let go the seeming profit, and credit, and pleasure of sin, and to deny the flesh, and forsake the world; and we are averse to the spiritual felicity of the Saints, and to the Holiness of heart, and life, that is the way to it; And therefore Christ hath most wisely so ordered it, in the tenour of his Promises, that our Repentance and Faith shall be the Condition of our Justification and deliverance from death and Hell: And this Faith is the believing in him, and Accepting him Entirely in his whole Office, to Sanctifie us, and Rule us, as well as to Justifie us: And thus we must take him wholly, or we shall have none of him. And the Accepting him as our Teacher, and Sanctifier, and King, is as much (at least the Condition of our Justification, and Pardon, and deliverance from Hell,) as the Accepting him as a Justifier of us, is. He that had the Power in his own hands, and that made the free Promise, or Deed of Gift, hath put in such Conditions, as his own Wisdom saw best; and they are such as suit most congruously to *all* his Ends: even the Glory of God, in all his Attributes, and the Redeemers Glory, and our own, and most full and free Salvation: And on his Conditions must we have his Benefits, or we shall never have them.

7. Lastly, Understand and Note, that the Means which Christ hath resolved on for Teaching, and Ruling us, ordinarily, are *his Word, his Ministers, and his Spirit*; all must be submitted to together, where they may be had, and none of them laid by, by separation. His *Word* is

is the *Grammar*, or *Book*, as it were, that we must learn : His *Ministers* must teach us this *Book* : And his *Spirit* (who in the *Apostles*, and *Prophets* indited and sealed it) must inwardly teach us, by powerful *Illumination*. The *Word* is *Gods Laws* : the *Ministers* are his *Embassadors*, or *Heralds* to proclaim them, and command *obedience* in his *Name* ; and his *Spirit* must open mens hearts to entertain them. The *Word* is *Gods Seed* ; the *Ministers* are the *Husbandmen*, or *Servants* that sow it, and the *Spirit* must given the increase ; without which, our *planting*, and *watering* will do nothing. He therefore that takes *Christ* for his *Master*, and *King*, must resolve to be taught, and ruled by his *established means*, even by his *Word*, and *Ministers*, and *Spirit* conjunct : For he that *refuseth* and *despiseth* these, doth *refuse* and *despise* *Christ* ; and consequently the Father that sent him, *Luke* 10. 16. 1 *Thes*. 4. 8. For it was never the meaning of *Christ*, when he became the *Teacher* and *King* of the *Church*, to stay on *Earth*, and personally, and visibly to teach them himself ; but these three are his means, which all must submit to, that will be his *Subjects* and *Disciples*. And he that despiseth the *Word*, shall be destroyed, *Prov*. 13. 13. He that will not have the *Word*, *Ministry*, and *Spirit* teach him, will not have *Christ* teach him : and he that refuseth to be ruled by these three, shall be destroyed as a *Rebel* against *Christ* himself, *Luke* 19.27. Still it is supposed that *Ministers* must *Teach*, and *Rule* according to this *Word*.

And the *Society* in which *Christ* will *Teach* and *govern* us, is his *Church* ; As members therefore of the *Universal Church*, and in *Communion* with his *Particular Church*, where we live and have opportunity, we must wait on *Christ* for his *Teaching* and *Benefits*. For this is his *School*, where his *Disciples* must diligently attend and learn.

Lay

Lay all this together, and this is the sum : The Object of Justifying, Saving Faith, is One only undivided Christ, one in Person, but of two Natures, God, and Man ; in Office the Mediator between God and man, who hath already done the work of Satisfaction, and Merit, and is authorized further to bestow the Benefits : By the Gospel Grant he hath given himself as Head, and Husband, Teacher, King, and Saviour, to all that will entirely and heartily accept him ; and with himself he giveth Justification by the promise, Sanctification by the Word, Ministry, and Spirit, and final Absolution, and Everlasting Life. If ever then you will have Christ, and Life, you must accept him in all these Essentials of his Person, and Offices, and that to the Ends which his Redemption was intended for : you must be willing to be Sanctified by him, as well as to be Justified : You must at once unfeignedly become his Disciples, his Subjects, his Members, if you would become his saved ones. You must consent, that as your Teacher, and your Lord, he shall Teach and Rule your heart, and life, by his Word, Ministers, and Spirit, in Communion with his Church. No bar or exception must be put in, nor reservation made against any one of these parts of his Office. If you yield not to those parts of his Saving work, that tend but to the compleative growth, you sin, and deprive your selves of the Benefit : but if you yield not to those that must make you truly Sanctified, and Justified men, you cannot be saved. The Essentials of Christ's Person, and Office, do constitute him the Christ, and if he be not received in all those Essentials, he is not received as Christ.

And thus I have given you the sum of the Gospel, and the description of Faith, and true Christianity in this Direction for a right closing with the Lord Jesus Christ. And experience of most that I discourse with, persuades

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me to think this Direction of Great necessity , and to intreat you throughly to peruse and consider it ; I find abundance of ignorant people , that talk much of Christ, but know very little of him ; that can scarce tell us whether he be God or man , or which Person in the Trinity he is , nor to what End he was incarnate , and died , nor what Relation he stands in to us , or what use he is of , or what he now is , or what he is engaged to do for us . But if we ask them about their hopes of Salvation , they almost overlook the Redemption by Christ , and tell us of nothing but Gods Mercies , and their own good meanings , and endeavours . And I am afraid too many Professors of Piety , (do look) almost all , at the Natural part of Religion , and the mending of their own hearts , and lives , (and I would this were better done) while they forget the supernatural part , and little are affected with the infinite Love of God in Christ . I desire such to consider these things : 1. You overlook the summ of your Religion , which is Christ Crucified , besides whom *Paul* desired to know nothing . 2. You overlook the fountain of your life , and the author of your supplies ; and you strive in vain for Sanctification , or Justification , if you seek them not from a Crucified Christ . 3. You leave undone the principal part of your work , and live like moral Heathens , while you have the name of Christians . Your daily work is to study God in the face of his Son ; and to labour with all Saints to comprehend the *height* , and *breadth* , and *length* , and *depth* , and to know the *Love of Christ* , which passeth knowledge . *Ephes. 3. 18, 19.* All your Graces should be daily quickned , and set a work by the life of Faith , in the contemplation of the Redeemer , and his blessed work . This is the weight that must set all the wheels agoing . You do God no Service , that he can accept , if you serve him not in this Gospel-work , of loving , trusting , and admiring , and

and praising him in the Redeemer, and for his Redemption. 4. And so you rob God of the principal part of his Glory, which you are to give him; which is for this most glorious work of our Redemption. I pray you read over again the *Ends* of this work, which I laid down in the beginning of this Direction. 5. Moreover you rob your selves of your principal comfort, which must all come in, by living upon Christ. 6. And you harden the *Antinomians* and *Libertines*, and tempt men to their extreams, that run from us as *Legalists*, and as men that favour not the Doctrine of free Grace, and are not of a Gospel-Spirit and conversation. I would our great neglect of Christ had not been a snare to these mistaken Souls, and a stumbling-block in their way.

O Sirs, if a thought of your hearts, if a word of your mouths have not some relation to Christ, suspect it, yea reject it. Call it not a Sermon or a Prayer, nor a duty, that hath nothing of Christ in it. Though the pure God-head be your principal End, yet there is no way to this End, but by Christ: and though Love, which is exercised on that *End*, must animate all your graces, and duties, as they are *Means* to that End; yet Faith hath Love in it, or else it is not the Christian Faith; and Christ is the Object of your Faith and Love; and your perfect Everlasting Love will be animated by Christ; For your Love and Praise will be to him that was slain, and Redeemed us to God by his Blood, out of every Kindred, Tongue, and Nation, and made us Kings and Priests to God. So much for the fifth Direction.

Direct.

Direct. VI. The next Direction which I would give you for a through Conversion, is this : See that the flesh be thoroughly mortified, and your hearts be thoroughly taken off the world, and all its pleasures, and profits and honours, and that the Root of your fleshly Interest prevail not at the heart, and that you think not of reconciling God and the world, as if you might secure your Interest in both.

This is a very common cause of the deceit and destruction of such as verily think they are converted. It is the very Nature, and busines of true Conversion, to turn mens hearts from the flesh, and from the world to God, and from an earthly and seeming happiness, to a Heavenly Real Everlasting Happiness. And when men are affrighted into some kind of Religiousnes, and yet never learnt to deny themselves, and never mortified their fleshly mind, but the love of this world is still the chiefest principle at their hearts ; and so go on in Profession of godliness, with a secret reserve, that they will look as well as they can to their outward prosperity, whatever become of their Religion, and they will have no more to do with the matters of another world, than may stand with their bodily safety in this world ; these are the miserable deluded Hypocrites, whose hopes will prove as the giving up of the Ghost ; whom Christ will disown in their greatest extremities, after all their seeming Religiousnes. O Sirs, look to this as ever you would be happy. Its an easie, its a common, its a most dangerous thing, to set upon a course of outward Piety, and yet keep the world next your hearts, and take it still as a great part of your felicity, and secretly to love your former lusts, while you seem to be converted. The heart is so deceitful, that you have great cause to watch it narrowly in this point : It will closely cherish the love of the world, and your fleshly pleasures,

sures, when it seems to renounce them, and when your tongue can speak contemptuously of them. It was not for nothing that Christ would have the first fruits of his Gospel-Church (who were to be the Example of their successors) to sell all, and lay it down at the feet of his Apostles : And it is his standing Rule, that *Whoever he be, that forsaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be his Disciple*, Luke 14. 33. In estimation, affection, and resolution, it must be forsaken by all that will be saved ; and also in practice, when ever God calls us to it. You can have but one Happiness ; If you will needs have it in this world, in the contenting of your flesh, there is no hope of having it also in another world, in the fruition of God. If you think not God and Heaven enough for you, and cannot let go the Prosperity of the flesh for them, you must let go all your hopes of them. God will not halve it with the world in your hearts, nor part stakes with the flesh ; much less will he be below them, and take their leavings : Heaven will not be theirs, that set not by it more than Earth. God will not call that Love to him *Sincere*, which is not a Superlative Love, and able to make you even hate all those things that would draw away your affections and obedience from him, Luke 14. 26, 27. There's no talk of serving God and Mammon, and compounding you a Happiness of Earth and Heaven. Do therefore as Christ bids you, Luke 14. 28, 29, 30.

Sit down and *count what it must cost you, if you will be saved* ; and on what rates it is that you must follow Christ. Can you voluntarily, for the love of him, and the hope of Glory, take up your Cross, and follow him in poverty, in losses, in reproaches, through scorns, and scourgings, and prisons and death ? Do you value his loving kindness better than life ? *Psal. 63. 3.* Can you deny your eyes and your appetites their desires ? Can

you consent to be vile in the eyes of men, and to tame your own flesh, and keep it in subjection, and live a flesh-displeasing life, that having suffered with Christ, you may also be glorified with him ? *Rom. 8. 17.* If you cannot consent to these terms, you cannot be Christians, nor you cannot be Saved. If you *must* needs be rich, or *must* be honourable, yea, if you *must* needs save your estates, or liberties, or lives, its past all question, you *must* needs let go Christ and Glory : If you *must needs* have the world, you *must needs* lose your Souls. If you *must* have your good things here, you *must* not have them hereafter too, but be tormented, when Christs sufferers are comforted, *Luke 16. 25.* These hopes of purveying for the flesh, as long as they can, and then of being saved, when they can stay here no longer, is it that hath deceived many a thousand, to their undoing, Its a strange thing to see how the world doth blind very knowing men, and how unacquainted these Hypocrites are with their own hearts. What a confident profession of down-right godliness many of them will make, yea of some extraordinary height in Religion, when nothing is so dear to them as their present prosperity, and God hath not near so much interest in them as the flesh ? What contrivances some of them make for riches, or rising in the world ? And how tender others are of their honour with men ; and how tenacious they are of their Mammon of unrighteousness ; and how much money, and great men can do with them : And most of them pamper their flesh, and serve it in a cleanlier way of Religiousness, even as much, though not so disgracefully, and grossly, as drunkards, and whoremongers do in a more discernable sensuality. If the times do but change, and countenance any error, how small an Argument will make their judgments bend with the times ; If truth or duty *must* cost them dear : O how they will

will shift, and stretch, and wriggle, to prove Truth to be no Truth, and duty to be no duty ; and no Argument is strong enough to satisfie them, when the flesh doth but say, *Its bitter, its dangerous, it may be my undoing.*

Its none of my meaning, that any should needlessly run into suffering, or cross their governors, and themselves, through a spirit of pride, singularity, and contradiction : But that men should think themselves truly Religious, that keep such reserves for their fleshly interest, and shew by the very drift of their lives, that they are worldlings, and never felt what it was to be crucified to the world, and deny themselves, but are Religious on this supposition only, that it may stand with their worldly ends, or at least not undo them in the world ; this is a lamentable hypocritical self-deceit. When God hath so plainly said, *Love not the world, nor the things that are in the world: If any man love the world, the Love of the Father is not in him,* 1 Joh. 2.15. Nay that the neighbourhood, and all the Country that know them, should ring of the worldliness of some, that think themselves good Christians ; and yet they will not see it themselves : What a cheating, blinding thing is the world ?

Well Sirs, if you will be Christians, count what it must cost you : And if you will be Heirs of Heaven, away with the world : Cast it out of your hearts : and if your hands must yet trade in it, yet trade not for it : Use it for God, but enjoy it not for it self. Take your selves as strangers here ; and look on the world as a desolate wilderness ; through which, in the Communion of the militant Saints, you may safely travel on to Heaven ; but do not make it your home, nor take it for the smallest part of your felicity. To be Sanctified without Mortification, is a palpable contradiction. Be at a point with all things below, if you will groundedly hope for the Heavenly inheritance. But I shall purposely forbear to

enlarge this any further, because I have preached, and written a Treatise on this Subject, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct. VII. My next Direction is this : *If you would be truly Converted, be sure that you make an absolute resignation of your selves, and all that you have to God.*

This is the very form, and life of Sanctification. To be Sanctified, is to be separated, in heart, life, and profession, from all other Masters, and Ends, to God, When the heart that was set upon the world, and flesh, is separated from them, and inclined to God by the power of Love, and devoted to him, to serve and please him ; this is indeed a Sanctified Heart : And when the life that before was spent in the service of Satan, the world, and the flesh, is now taken off them, and spent, as to the drift, and course of it, in the Service of God, for the Pleasing, and Glorifying of him, from the impulse of Love, this is indeed a *Holy* life. And herein consisteth the very nature of our Sanctity. And when a man doth but *profess* to renounce the Devil, the world, and the flesh, and to give up his heart and life to God, this is a *Profession* of Holiness, God is both on the title of Creation, Preservation, and Redemption, our absolute Lord or Owner, and we are not our own but his ; And therefore we must *give* to God the *things* that are Gods, and Glorifie him in our Souls, and bodies, which are his, *1 Cor. 6, 19, 20.* As we are his Own, so he will have his Own, and be served by his Own : Do not imagine that you *have* any title to your selves, or propriety in your selves : but without any more ado, make a full, unreserved, absolute resignation of your selves, of your understandings, and of your wills,

of your bodies, and of your names, and of every pen-
ny-worth of your estates, to God, from whom, and for
whom you have them. Think not that you have power
to dispose of your selves, or of any thing that you have.
Ask not flesh and blood, what life you shall lead, or
what mind or will you shall be of : But ask God, to
whom you do belong. Ask not your carnal selves, what
you shall do with any of your estates, but ask God,
and then ask Conscience, Which is the way that God
would have me use it in, that is, which way may I use
it to be most serviceable to God ? And that resolve tip-
on. No service that you do to God, will prove you
Sanctified, unless you have heartily and absolutely given
up, and devoted your selves to him : and he that gives up
himself, must needs give up all that he hath with himself.
For he cannot keep it for himself (ultimately) when even
himself is given up to God. Though you be not bound to
give all that you have to the poor, nor all to the Church,
nor to deny your own bodies, or families their due
supplies, yet must it *all* be given up to God, even that
which you make use of for your selves, and families :
For as you are given up to God your selves, so you
must feed your selves as his, and cloath your selves,
and your families as his, to fit your selves, and them
for his Service, and not as your own, for the satis-
fying of your flesh. Thus it is that all comes to be
pure to the pure, Sanctified to them that are themselves
first Sanctified ; because when you feed your self, you
do but feed a Servant of God, that is Consecrated to
him, and separated from things common, and unclean.
And even as the Tythes, and Offerings, that were given
for the food and maintenance of the Priests, and Le-
vites, were called the *Lords Portion*, and *Holy to the
Lord*, because they were *their* portion that were sepa-
rated to his Altar ; Even so that which is necessary to fit you

for Gods Service, while you use it to that very end, is Sanctified in your Sanctification, and is Holy to God ; for all his Saints are a Holy Nation, a Royal Priesthood, to offer up acceptable sacrifice to him. And thus, whether you eat, or drink, or what ever you do, you must do all to the Glory of God, 1 Cor. 10. 31. For Of him, and Through him, and To him are all things, and therefore to him must be the Glory for ever, Rom. 11. 36. God who is the End of your hearts, and lives, must be the End of every action of them, unless you will step out of the way of Order, and Safety, and Holiness. For every action that is not from God, and by God, and for God, is contrary to the true nature of true Sanctification. If then you would be Christians indeed, be heartily willing that God should have his own. Understand what an excellent honour, and priviledge, and happiness it is to you to be his. If his Right to you will not move you, let your own necessity, and benefit at least move you, to give up your selves, and all you have to God. Bring your hearts to the bar, and plead the Cause of God with them, and convince them of Gods title to them, and how sinfully they have robbed him of his own all this while : Have your daies and hours, your wealth and interest, been used purposely for God as his own ! O what abundance be there, that in word, and confident profession, do give up themselves, and all to God, and yet in the Use of themselves, and all, do plainly shew that its no such matter ; but they dissembled with God, and yet never knew so much by themselves. How little do they use for God, when they have with seeming devotion resigned all to him ? If a Lord, or Knight, or Gentleman, of 4000l, or 3000l a year, or 400l, or 300l a year, were to shew the accounts of all his expences, how much of all this should you find expended for God, when they have acknowledged that all is his ? One would think

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by their lives, that they look to be saved by robbing God, and confessing the robbery ; by saying that *all* is Gods, while they allow him next to nothing.

The devoted, resigned, Sanctified Soul, hath the true principle of all obedience, and that which will do much to repell all temptations, and carry him through the greatest straits and tryals. If I am not my own, I need not be over solicitous for my self, but may expect that he that oweth me should care for me : Nor do I need to use any sinful shifts for my own preseryation. If I have nothing of my own, what need I to sin for the saving of any thing ? What need I to venture upon unwarrantable means, to preserve either credit, or goods, or life ? It is *Self*, and *Own*, that are the root of all sin, the heart of the old man, and the seed of Hell : Nothing else is pleaded against God, and our Salvation. If the flesh would have you abuse Gods Creatures, you must remember they are not your *own*. If the Devil would entice you to sin against God, either for the Getting, or Keeping of any Creature, it would easily repel the temptations, were you but rightly sensible, that nothing is your *own* : For God hath no need that you should sin, to get *Riches*, or *Honours*, for *him*. If you are called to let go your houses, or lands, or friends, or lives, or to deliver up your bodies to the flames, did you but rightly take them as none of your *own*, how easie would it be ! You can be content that another man give his goods, or life it self to God, when ever God requireth it : but your *own*, you cannot be content to part with ; and that because it is your *own*. But if you had rightly resigned all to God, and took not your selves, or any thing for your *own*, but lookt upon your selves, and all as Gods, the greatest works of obedience, or suffering, would be much more easie to you ; and you would have little difficulty, or hindrance in your way. Self-denial is

but Sanctification it self, denominated from the wrong End, and Principle, which we forsake. And where self is denied, and dead, what is there left to draw us from God, or stand up against him, in any part of our lives? So much interest as *self* hath in you, so much the world and the Devil hath in you. And nothing is more proper to a miserable Hypocrite, than deep Reserves of life, or worldly things to themselves, while they seem to give up all to God.

O happy soul, that is wrought to this sincerity, by the Spirit of Grace! to say unfeignedly, *O Lord, I devote, and resign my self wholly unto thee? I am not my own, nor desire any further to be, than to be thine: I have nothing that is my own, nor desire to have any thing that shall not be thine.* Happy and truly wise is that man, that keeps as constant, and faithful a reckoning, how he lays out himself, and all that he hath for God, as a faithful Steward doth, of his receivings, and layings out for his Masters use. Every penny that is reserved from God, is the fuel of sin, and a Sacrifice to the Devil, and the flesh; and if it be pardoned to the truly penitent, by the Sacrifice of Christ, that's no thanks to us, that would else have made it the fuel of Hell. God is not so careless of us, or his Mercies, but that he keeps an exact account of all that we have from him, and will require an account of our improvement of all: Not only requiring his *own* again but his *own* with advantage, *Matth. 25. 27.* Why else did he give us such leisure, and ability to improve it? *I can never forget what a sinful thought was once in my mind, which I will venture to confess, because it may possibly be the case of others, that so they may beware:* Hearing of some that used to lay by the tenth part of their yearly coming in for charitable uses, I purposed to do so too, and thought it a fair proportion; But since I have perceived what a vile and wicked thought

thought that was, to offer to cut out a scantling for God, or give him a limited share of his *own*, or say that so much he shall have, and no more.) Though we cannot say that God must have all in *any one kind of service only*; either *only for the Church*, or *only for the poor*, or *only for publick uses*: yet must we resolve, that in *one way or other* he must have *all*; and the particular proportions to the poor, or Church, or other uses, must be assigned by truly Sanctified prudence, considering which way it may be most serviceable to God. I must relieve my own family, or kindred, if they want: but not because they are *my own*, but because God hath commanded me, and so hath made it a part of my obedience: But if I see where I may do more service to God, by relieving a stranger, and that God doth more require it, I must yet prefer them before all the kindred that I have in the world. When the Christian pattern was set up by the Primitive Church, *Acts 2. & 4.* they sold all, and laid down the whole price at the Apostles feet, which was not distributed to their natural kindred only, but to all the poor Christians that had *no* other relation to them, even as every one had *need*. And as it is the loving of our Spiritual Brethren in Christ, that is made the sign of our translation from death to life, so is it the relieving of Christ in these his Members, that is, the relieving them, *because* they are his Members, that is made the very matter of our Cause in the last Judgement, and the ground of the sentence of life, or death, *Mat. 25.* I must provide for my own body, and you must provide for your children, but that is (as I said before) not as I am *my own*, nor as your children are *your own*; but as I am a Servant of Christ, that must be supported in his Service, or as your selves, and yours are put under your care and duty by God. So that I may give it to my self, or others, when I can truly say,

I do but use it principally for God, and think that the principal Service I can do him by it ; but I may neither take to my self, nor give to any that are nearest to me, any more than God commandeth, or his Service doth require. When you and yours have your *daily bread*, (which also must be used for him) you must not go to flesh and blood, but to God, to ask which way you shall dispose of the remainder. This is a strange Doctrine to the unsanctified world ; but that is because they are unsanctified. And it is a Doctrine that a worldly Hypocrite is loth to believe, and understand ; but that is because of Carnality, and Hypocrisie, that alwayes deals with God, like *Ananias* and *Saphira*, lying to the Holy Ghost, and giving God but half, (and few so much as half) when they daily confess that all is from him, and should be his, and pretend to be wholly devoted to him. There are few men so bad, but will spare God something, rather than go to Hell : But indeed this is not to devote it to God, but to use it for themselves, thinking by their sacrifices, to stop the mouth of Justice, and to please God by a part, when they have displeased him in the rest. I much fear (and not without apparent cause) that abundance among us, that think themselves Christians, do worship, and serve God, but as some *Indians* are said to offer sacrifice to the Devil, not for any love they have to him, or his service, but for fear he should hurt them. And there are few Hypocrites but will pretend it is from very love.

O Sirs, its a greater matter to resign and give up your selves, and all you have to God, and heartily to quit all claim to your selves, and all things, than many a thousand self-deluding professors do imagine. Many look at this but as some high extraordinary strain of Piety, and the *Papists* almost appropriate it to a few that live in Monastical orders, when indeed the sincerity of this

Resignation,

Resignation, and Dedication, is the very sincerity of Sanctification it self.

And let me tell you, that the Unfeigned Convert that attains to this, hath not only pluckt up the Root of sin, (though all of us have too many strings of it left) nor only stopt up the spring of temptation, and got the surest evidence of his uprightness, but also is got himself into the safest, and most comfortable state. For when he hath absolutely resigned himself, and all to God, how confidently may he expect that God should accept him, and use him as his own? and how comfortably may he commit himself and his cause, and all good affairs to God, as knowing that God cannot be negligent and careless of his own? Its an argument that may make us confident of success, when we can say as *David*, *Psal. 119.94. I am thine, save me. Isa. 63, 19.* Even Christ himself doth ingratiate his Elect with the Father on this account, *Joh. 17. 6, 9, 10.* *Thine they were, and thou gavest them me : I pray for them : I pray not for the world, but for them which thou hast given me : for they are thine ; And all mine are thine, and thine are mine, and I am glorified in them.* And indeed by resigning all to God, it is the more our own ; that is, we have unspeakably more of the benefit of it, and so there is no way to make it our own, but by quitting it absolutely up to God : This is the mysterie that the world will not learn, but God will teach it all that shall be saved by the Spirit, and by Faith, *Math. 16. 24, 25, 26.* *Then Jesus said to his Disciples, If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me : For whosoever will save his life shall lose it ; and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it.* Methinks a man that hath time, and strength, and money, should long to be disburuing all for God, that he might put in the surest hands, and it may be out of danger ; yea that it may be set to the

the most honest and profitable usury. For when God hath it from the dedication of an upright heart, it is sure : but till God have it, it is in hazard ; and all that he hath not is lost, and worse than lost. When it is in our hands, thieves may steal it, bad Servants, or unadvised Children may consume it, and our own thievish flesh may steal it worst of all, and consume it on our lusts ; or if *our* Children consume it not, *their* Children may : Or if they save it, they may lose it most of all by feeding their pride and fleshly minds by it : But if once it be in Gods hands, it is safe. You can make no comfortable account of one penny, nor of one hours time, unless you can tell God that he had it himself ; that you used it for him ; Or that you live to him in the *main*, and that the rest is pardoned. O that those Parents understood this Doctrine, that had rather strengthen the fettters, and temptations of their Children with it, and help them into that state which few are saved in, than to devote and use their estates for God ! Though Christ hath told them how hardly the Rich are saved, and how few such come to Heaven, yet what care is taken to leave their Children rich ; and how little to further the Work of God, or their own accounts, that they may hear the Well done, good and faithful servant : thou hast been *sheep* faithful over a few things : I will make thee Ruler over many things : enter thou into the joy of thy Lord, Matth. 25. 21, 23.

O Sirs, if you would be good husbands, and provident indeed for your Souls, see that your hearts prove not false to you in this, and make no secret reserves for your selves, but that God have your selves first, and all things with your selves ; as Christ first gives himself to you, and all things with himself, Rom. 8. 32. Never think your hearts right, but when they can readily say, *We are not our own*, 1 Cor. 6. 19. Think not that

you come aright to God in any duty, if you do not heartily devote *your selves* to him, and intreat him to accept you, as wholly his, who neither are, nor desire to be your own : and intreat him accordingly to use you for himself. Say not that any thing is your *Own* that you possess, *Acts 4. 32.* in respect to *God*, and a *Com-
munion of Charity* ; though it be your *own* (as a Ta-
lent that God doth intrust you with) in respect of *men*,
by a *Legal Propriety*.

And then trust God boldly, for you are his *Own* : Serve him cheerfully, and draw neer him believably, for you are his *Own*. In poverty, sickness, temptations, and the approach of death, rejoice in him confidently, for you are his *Own*. Into his hands commend your departing Spirits, for they are his *Own*. What reason of distrustful fears can you now have ? Do you fear lest God will yet hate you ; why remember that *no man ever yet hated his own flesh*, *Ephes. 5. 29*. Nay for shame, think not the blessed God to be worse than the wicked world ; and Christ saith of the world, *Joh. 15. 19*. *If ye were of the world, the world would love his own*. And will not God then Love his *Own* do you think ? And if you are willing to be his *Own*, Christ is certainly willing that you *should* be his *Own* ; and will *Own* all that *Own*, not themselves, but *him*. *He calleth his Own sheep by name, and leadeth them out ; and when he putteth forth his Own sheep he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him : for they know his voice*, *Joh. 10. 3, 4*. And *Joh. 13. 1. Having loved his Own which are in the world, to the End he loved them*.

If you are but truly willing to be his *Own* People, he is certainly willing to be your *Own* Saviour and your *Own* God. Not that you can have such a propriety in him, as he hath in you. But in these *Relations* he will be your *Own* ; and Glory, and Help, and Saluation shall be yours.

yours. And you may well conclude that *God, even our Own God, shall bless us*, Psal. 6. 7, 6. There is much comfort may be fetcht from that in *Luke 15. 31.* though Parables must not be stretcht too far : *Son thou art ever with me, and all that I have is thine.*

And upon this ground it is that we have the greater encouragement, to believe that God accepteth of our very Infants themselves ; because it is his Will that they should be *Devoted, engaged, and dedicated to him* : And that which he would have us dedicate and offer to him, he will surely accept in that Relation to which he would have it offered.

I beseech you therefore remember what it is to be truly converted : It is to be called from things common and unclean, and separated to God ; It is to be brought nigh to him, as the Children of his Household, that are themselves, and all that they have in his hands : It is to be taken off your *Selves*, and your *Own*, and to lose your selves, and all you have in God, by the most gainful loss ; lest indeed you lose your selves, and all, while you perswade your selves you *save*, or *gain*. It is a taking God in Christ for your *All*, and so being content to have Nothing but him, and for him. It is a changing of your old Master *self*, for *God* a better Master, and your old work, which was *self-seeking*, and *self-pleasing*, to *self-denial*, and to the seeking, and pleasing of God. See now that this be done, and that your treacherous hearts hide nothing for themselves, as *Rache* under pretence of necessity, hid her Idols, but say, *Here I am, to be thine, O Lord, and to do thy Will.*

More I would have said on this point, but that I have written of it already, in a Sermon on *1 Cor. 6. 19, 20.* the Absolute Dominion of Christ, and our self-resignation ; which I desire you here to peruse, to set this further home.

Direct. VIII. My next Advice that the Work of Conversion may not miscarry, is this : *Take heed, lest you mistake a meer change of your Opinions, and outward profession, and behaviour, for a true Saving change.*

Wicked Opinions must be changed, and so must evil professions, and outward practices : But if no more be changed, you are wicked still. I have great cause to fear that this is the most common damning deceit, that useth to befall professors of Godliness, and that its the case of most Hypocrites, in the Church. A man may be brought to hold any Truth in Scripture as an Opinion ; and so far be sound, and Orthodox ; and yet never be indeed a sound Believer, nor have his Heart possessed with the life and power of those Sacred Truths. Its one thing to have a mans Opinion changed, and another thing to have his Heart renewed, by the change of his Practical Estimation, Resolutions, and Dispositions. Its one thing to turn from loose prophane Opinions, to strict Opinions ; and think the Godly are indeed in the right, and that their case and way is safest, and best : and its another thing to be made *One* of them in Newnes, and Spirituality of heart, and life. A lively Faith differs much from Opinion : and that which is in unsanctified men, which we call *Faith*, and is a kind of *Faith* indeed, it is but a meer Opinionative *Faith* : I call it an Opinionative *Faith*, Because it differs from Saving *Faith*, much like as *Opinion* doth from *Knowledge*. Meerly speculative it is not ; for some intention of practice there is : But the Practical Intention of such persons, differs from the Predominant intentions of the Sanctified, even as their *Opinionative Faith* differs from the Saving *Faith*.

And

And it is no wonder if there be abundance of these Opinionative believers in the world : For the Truths of God have very great evidence, especially some of them ; and men are yet men, and consequently reasonable Creatures ; and therefore have some aptitude to discern the Evidence of Truth : Some Truths will compel Assent even from the unwilling : Many a thousand ungodly men believe that to be True, which they would not have to be True, if they could help it ; because they do not heartily take it to be Good in respect to themselves. Truth as Truth, is the Natural Object of the Understanding ; though the same Truth as seeming evil to them, may be hated by them that are forced to Assent to it. I know that sin hath much blinded mens understandings, and that the natural man Receiveth not the things of the Spirit, because they are foolishnes to him, and must be spiritually discerned, *1 Cor. 2.14.* But though he cannot Savingly receive them without the *Special* illumination of the Spirit, nor *Opinionatively* receive them without a *common* illumination of the Spirit, yet he may have this Opinionative conviction, and an answerable reformation, by the common Grace of the Spirit, without the Special Grace. An unsanctified man may have something more than Nature in him : and every unregenerate man is not *merely*, or *only* Natural. Many are far convinced, that are far from being Savingly Converted. I can make you know that you shall die, that you must part with all your wealth, and fleshly pleasures, and divers such Truths, whether you will or not. And one of these Truths doth let in many more, that depend upon them. So that as dark as the minds of natural men are, they yet lie open to many whollom Truths.

And as the Understanding is thus far open to Conviction, so the Will it self, which is the Heart of the old man,

man, will far sooner yield to the changing of your *Opinions* than to the saving change of Heart, and life. It is not the bare *Opinion*; that your fleshly interest doth fight against, but the Power and Practice of Godliness is it; and *Opinions* as they lead to these. Its one thing to be of *Opinion*, that Conversion is necessary, that sin *must* be forsaken, and God preferred before all the world: And its another thing to be *indeed Converted*, and to *forsake* sin, and to *prefer* God before the world. Its a far easier matter to convince a worldling that he *should not* love the world, than to cure him of his worldly love: and to convince a drunkard that he should leave his drunkenness; and the whoremonger; that he should abhor his lusts, than to bring them to do these things, which they are convinced of: It will cost them dear (as the flesh accounts it) to deny themselves, and cast away the sin: but it costeth not so dear to take up the *Opinion* that these things *should* be done. It will cost them dear to be down-right for God, and practically Religious: but they can take up an *Opinion* that Godliness is the best and necessary course, at a cheaper rate! Strict *Practices* pinch the flesh, but strict *Opinions* may stand with its *liberty*: O What abundance of our poor neighbours would go to Heaven, that are now in the way to Hell, if an *Opinion* that Godliness is the wisest course, would serve the turn. If instead of Conversion God would take up with an *Opinion* that they ought to *turn*; and if instead of a Holy, Heavenly life, God would accept of an *Opinion* that such are the happiest men, that live such a life; and if instead of temperance, and meekness, and self-denial; and forgiving wrongs; God would accept of an *Opinion*, and Confession, that they should be temperate and meek, and self-denying, and should forbear others, and forgive them; then O what abundance would be saved, that are now in little

hope of Salvation ! If instead of a diligent life of Holiness, and good works, it would serve turn to lie still, and be of a good *Opinion*, that men should strive, and labour for Salvation, and lay out all they have for God; how happy then were our Towns, and Countries, in comparison of what they are !

I am afraid this deceit will be the undoing of many, that they take a change of their *Opinions* for a true Conversion. Have not some of you been formerly of the mind, that the best way is to eat, and drink, and be merry, and venture your Souls, and follow your worldly business, and never trouble your selves with any deep and searching thoughts about your Spiritual state, or your Salvation ? Have you not thought that this diligent godliness, is but a needless strictness, and preciseness ? and have you not since been Convinced of your error, and perceived, that this is the wisest course, which you before thought to be needless, and thereupon have betaken you to the company of the godly, and set upon a course of outward duties ? and now you think that you are made New Creatures, and that *this* is Regeneration, and the work is done. I fear lest this be all the Conversion that many forward professours are acquainted with ! But wo to them that have no more.

And because the face of our prefent times, doth plainly shew the commonness and prevalency of this disease, and because it is a matter of so great concernment to you, I shall here give you (but as briefly as I well can) some signs by which a true Conversion may be known from this meer Opinionative Change.

1. The true Convert is brought to an unfeigned Hatred of the whole Body of sin; and especially of those secret, or beloved sins, that did most powerfully captivate him before, 1 Cor. 6. 11. Tit. 3. 3, 5. Col. 3. 3, 5, 7, 8. But the Opinionative Convert is still Carnal, and

and unmortified, and inwardly at the heart, the interest of the flesh is habitually predominant. He is not brought to an unreconcileable hatred to the great master sins that ruled him, and lay deepest; but only hath eased the top of his stomach, and cropt off some of the branches of the tree of death. The Thorns of worldly desires, and cares, are still rooted in his heart; and therefore no wonder if they choak the seed of wholesome Truth, and there be a greater *Harvest* for the Devil than for God, *Gal. 5. 24. & 6. 4, 8. Romans 8. 5. Matt. 13. 22.*

2. Another sign that follows upon this, is, that the sound Convert doth carry on the course of his Obedience, in a way of self-denial, as living in a continual conflict with his own flesh, and expecting his comfort and Salvation to come in upon the conquest: And therefore he can suffer for Christ, as well as be found in cheaper obedience, and he dare not ordinarily refuse the most costly service. For the spoils of his fleshly desires are his prey, and Crown of glorying in the Lord, *Luke 14. 27, 33. Gal. 5. 17, 24. 1 Cor. 9. 27. Luke 9. 23. 24. 2 Cor. 12. 9. Gal. 6. 14.*

But the *Opinionative* Convert still liveth to his carnal-self: and therefore secretly at least, seeks himself, and layeth hold on present things, as the true Convert layeth hold on Etefnal Life. The Truths of God being received but into his *Opinion*, do not go deep enough to conquer self, and to take down his great Idol, nor make him go through fire, and water, and to serve God with the best, and honour him with his substance, much less with his sufferings and death: He hath something that he cannot spare for God, *Matt. 13. 21. Luke 18. 22, 23, 24.*

3. The sound Convert hath taken God for his Portion, and Heaven for that sure and full felicity, which

he is resolved to venture upon : That is that he hath set his heart , and hopes upon , and thither tends the drift of his life , *Col. 3. 1, 2, 3, 4.* *Matt. 6. 20, 21.*

But he that is changed only in his *Opinions* , had never such sure apprehensions of the life to come : nor so full a confidence in the Promises of God , as to set his heart unfeignedly upon God , and make him truly Heavenly-minded. He may have a Heavenly tongue , but he hath an Earthly heart. A bare *Opinion* , be it never so true , will not raise mens hearts so high , as to make their Affections , and the very design , and busines of their lives to be Heavenly , *Phil. 3. 18, 19, 20.* *Rom. 16. 17, 18.* *Rom. 8. 5.*

4. The sound Convert hath seen the vileness of himself , in the sinfulness of his heart , and life , and the misery thereby deserved ; and so is a sincerely humbled self-accusing man.

But the *Opinionist* is commonly unhumbled , and well conceited of himself , and a self-justifying Pharisee ; unless it be that self-accusing will cost him no disgrace , and he take it up as a custom , or that which may bring him into the repute of being humbled , and sincere. For his *Opinion* will not search , and pierce his heart , nor batter down his self-exalting thoughts , nor root up the master sin of Pride. These are too great works for an *Opinion* to perform. And therefore you shall hear him more in the excusing of his sin , the magnifying of himself , or the stiff maintaining of his own conceits , than in unfeigned self-abasing , *Rom. 12. 16.* *1 Cor. 1. 19, 20.* & *3. 18.* *2 Cor. 10. 12.* *Luke 16. 15.*

5. The Sound Convert is so acquainted with the defects , and sins , and necessities of his own Soul , that he is much taken up at home , in his studies , and cares , and censures , and his daily work : The Acting , and strengthening of Grace , the subduing of corruption , and



and his daily walk with God, are much of his employment : Above all keeping, he keeps his Heart, as knowing that thence are the issues of life. He cannot have while to spy out the faults of others, and meddle with their affairs, where duty binds him not, as others can do ; because he hath so much to do at home, *Gal. 6. 3, 4. Prov. 4. 23.*

But the *Opinionist* is most employed abroad, and about mere notions, and *Opinions* ; but he is little employed in such heart searching, or heart-observing work. His light doth not pierce so deep as to shew him his heart, and the work that is there to be necessarily done. As the change is little upon his Heart, so his employment is little there. He is little in bewailing his secret defects, and corruptions ; and little in keeping his Souls accounts, and little in secret striving with his heart, to work it into communion with God, and into a Spiritual lively fruitful frame. He is forward to aggravate the sins of others, and oft-times severe enough in censuring them : But he is a very gentle censurer of himself, and a patient man with his own corruptions, and puts the best construction upon all that is his own. He hath much labour perhaps in shaping his *Opinions* ; but little for the humbling and Sanctifying his heart, by the power of the Truth.

6. And as the difference lyeth thus constantly in the Heart, so it is usually manifested by the tongue, *Matt. 12. 34.* The Sound Convert is most desirous to discourse of those great and saving truths, which his very heart hath taken in, and which he hath found to be the seed of God for his Regeneration, and the Instruments of that Holy and happy change, that is made upon him : He feeleth most favour, and life in these great, and most Necessary points, which formed the image of God upon him : and upon these he daily feeds and lives.

Read *Job. 17. 3.* *1 Cor. 15. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6.* *1 Cor. 2. 2.*
Phil. 3. 8, 9, 10, 11. *1 Tim. 3. 16.* *Acts 26. 22, 23.*
 In these Scriptures, you may find what points they were
 that the greatest Saints did study, and live upon.

But the *Opinionist* is most forward to discourse of
 meer *Opinions*; and to feed upon the air of notions, and
 controversies of lesser moment. For one hours Holy,
 Heavenly, experimental, heart-searching discourse, that
 you shall have from him, you shall have many, and
 many hours discourse of his *Opinions*. I mean it indif-
 ferently of all his *Opinions*, whether true or false. For
 though falsehoods cannot be fit food for the Soul, yet
 Truths themselves, also may be made of little service to
 them. A man may be a meer Opinionist, that hath *true*
Opinions, as well as he that hath false. Almost all the
 free and zealous discourse of these men, on matters of
 Religion, is about their several sides, and parties, and
 Opinions; If they be set upon a point, especially wherein
 them seem to themselves to be wiser than others, they
 have a fire of zeal for it in their breasts, that makes them
 desirous to be propagating it to others. About the Or-
 ders, and Ceremonies of the Church; about the forms
 of Prayer, and the accidents of worship; about Infant
 Baptism, or other such controversies in Religion, is the
 freest of their discourse.

Yea, you may perceive much of the difference even
 in the very manner of their conference. A Serious
 Christian, even when he is necessitated to speak of
 lower controverted points, yet doth it in a Spiritual
 manner, as one that more favoureth higher Truths, and
 makes a Holy, and Heavenly life his end, even in these
 lower matters; and deals about such controversies in a
 practical manner, and in order to the growth of Ho-
 liness.

But the *Opinionists*, even when they speak of the
 most

most weighty Truths, do speak of them but as *Opinionis*; and when they discourse of God, of Christ, of Grace, of Heaven, it is but as they discourse of a point in Philosophy, or little better. They go not through the shell to the kernel they look after the *Truth*, but they have but little relish of the *Goodness*.

The like may be said of their reading, and hearing of Sermons. The sound Convert feeleth life and spirits in that which is little savory to the *Opinionist*. It is one thing in a Sermon, or Text, that is pleasant to a true Christian, and another thing usually that is most pleasant to the Opinionist. The true Christian delighteth in, and feedeth on the inward life of Spiritual Doctrine, and the Good which they offer him; that is, indeed, it is upon God, and Christ himself, that he is feasting his Soul in reading, and hearing: For this is the Soul of all, without which, letters, and words are but a carcass. But the superficial Opinionist is much more taken up, either with the History, or the Elegancy of Speech, or with the rational light of the discourse, still sticking in the bark, andavouring not Christ, and the Father in all. As a man that reads the deeds, or lease of his own Lands, delights in one thing; and a Clark that reads the *same*, or the like in a book of Presidents, for his learning, delights in another thing. So is it in this case.

7. And hence it follows, that they are several sorts of duties, and exercises, usually, that these several sorts of persons are most addicted to. The sound Convert is most addicted to those Spiritual means, that tend most to the strengthning of his Faith, and warning his heart with the Love of God, and promoting Holiness, and destroying sin. But the *Opinionist* delighteth most in those means that tend to furnish him with speculative Knowledge, and discourse, and to satisfie his fancie, or curious mind. The sound Convert is much addicted to

Prayer, even in secret, and to Heavenly Meditations, and gracious discourse. But the *Opinionist* is much more addicted to reading Histories, or Controversies, or dogmatical Divinity, or Civil, and Political matters. The sound Convert savoureth best those Preachers, and Books, that speak the most weighty, Spiritual Truths, in the most weighty Spiritual manner, in Power, and Demonstration of the Spirit: but the *Opinionist* relisheth those Preachers, and Books most, that either speak curiously to please the ear, or exactly, and learnedly to please the natural intellect, or that speak for the *Opinions*, or party that he is addicted to: But others, he hath less mind of.

8. Moreover the sound Christian layeth out most of his *Zeal*, *Affections*, and *Endeavours*, about the great Essentials of Religion, and that as I said in a practical manner, But the *Opinionist* layeth out his *Zeal* upon *Opinions*: Right or wrong, it is but as *Opinions*: Of these he makes his Religion: For these he contendeth; He loveth those best, that are of his own *Opinion*, though there be nothing of the special Image of God upon his Soul, Or if he love a true Christian, it is not so much for his Holiness, and Spirituality, as because he is of his mind in those matters of *Opinion*. Hence it is that he is usually a bitter censurer of those that are not of his *Opinion*, how upright soever they may be; His very esteem of men, and love to them is partial, and factious, to those that are of his Mind, and Sect; A *Papist* will esteem, and love men of the Popish Sect, and an *Anabaptist* will esteem, and love men of that Sect most; yea a *Protestant*, if he be an *Opinionist*, doth esteem of men, and love them as a Sect: Whereas the true Christian, as he is truly Catholick, and of the Catholick Church, which is not confined to *Papists*, no nor *Protestants*, so he hath truly Catholick affections, and loveth

loveth a Christian, as a Christian, a Godly man, as Godly; yea if he saw more serious Godliness in one that is not of his *Opinion* in lesser things, yet would he love him more than one that is in such matters of his *Opinion*, that is ungodly, or of more doubtful Piety. For as it is God in Christ that he principally loveth, so it is Christ that he admireth in his Members; and so much of Christ as he sees in any, so much are his special affections towards them.

9. Ordinarily the meer *Opinionist* will Sacrifice the very Ends of the Gospel, and the honour, and success of the great fundamental Truths of God, to the interest of those *Opinions*, which he hath in a singular manner made his own. He will rather hinder the propagation of the common Truths, and the Conversion of the ignorant, than he will silence his *Opinions*, or suffer them to lose any advantages with the world. Hence it is that we cannot prevail with the *Papists*, to silence a while the differences between us and them, till we have taught their ignorant (in *Ireland*, and other barbarous parts) the knowledge of those Truths that all are agreed in. Nor can we get many *Anabaptists*, or any such Sect, that is engaged in a division to forbear, their *Opinions*, till we have endeavoured to lay the necessary grounds, on which all must build, that will be saved. But though it be apparent to the world, that their disputes and contentions do exceedingly harden the ignorant, and ungodly against all Religion, and hinder their Conversion, and Salvation, yet will they go on in the unseasonable, intemperate bruizing of their conceits, and will not be persuaded to agree on those terms, for the managing of differences, as most tend to secure the interest of Christ, and his Gospel in the main. If an *Opinionist* be for the *Truth*, he is usually without much zeal for it, because that Nature doth not befriend the great Spiritual

Spiritual Truths of the Gospel, so much as it doth errours, and private conceits. But if he be of Erroneous *Opinions*, he is usually very zealous for them: For Corrupted Nature, and Self, and Satan, (and the world oft-times) do more befriend these, and furnish him with a zeal for them, and blow the coal. The counterfeit Angel of Light, is very ordinarily also a spirit of heat, and great activity: not a reviving fire, nor a refining fire, but a consuming fire, devouring Christian Love, and meekness, and patience, and therewith the Church, and Truth of God, so far as it can prevail. For lesser matters, that minister Questions, such men can lay by that which tends to Godly Edifying in Faith, 1 Tim. 1. 4. Yea that *Charity*, which is the very End of the Commandment, out of a *pure Heart*, a *good Conscience*, and *Faith unfeigned*, vers. 5. From these they swerve, and turn aside to vain jangling; oft-times desiring to be Teachers of such things, in which they understand not what they say, nor whereof they speak, vers. 6. 7. Consenting not to the wholesome Words of Christ, and the *Doctrine* which is according to Godliness, they teach otherwise, being proud, knowing nothing, but doting about questions, and strife of words, whereof cometh envy, strife, railings, evil surmisings, perverse disputing of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the Truth, 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5. Yea they sometime take their *Opinions*, or their worldly gain that they often aim at, to be instead of Godliness: And think, that to be Godly, is to be of their mind, and way. They *use to strive about words to no profit*, but to the subverting of the hearers, and their *vain babbling increase to more ungodliness*, 2 Tim. 2. 14, 16.

But the True Convert looks principally to the main: He loves every known Truth of God; but in their Order, and accordingly to their worth and weight: He will not for

for his own *Opinions*, wilfully do that which will hazard the main, or hinder the Gospel, and the saving of men's souls. Though he will not be false to any Truth, yet he will avoid foolish, and unlearned questions, knowing that *they do gender strife; and the Servant of the Lord must not strive, but be gentle to all men, and meekly instruct opposers; following Righteousness, Faith, Charity, Peace with them that call on the Lord out of a pure heart*, 2 Tim. 2. 22, 23, 24, 25.

10. Lastly, True Converts are stedfast, but Opinionists are usually mutable, and unconstant. The sound Convert receiveth the greatest Truths, and receives the Goodness as well as the Truth; and takes it not only into the Head, but into the Heart, and giveth it deep rooting: He closeth with God as his only felicity, and with Christ as his only Refuge, and Redeemer, and with heaven as the sure everlasting Glory, to which the world is but a mole hill, or a dungeon. No wonder then if this man be *stedfast, and unmovable, always abounding in the Work of the Lord, that knows, his Labour is not in vain in the Lord*, 1 Cor. 15.58.

But the *Opinionist*, either fastneth on smaller matters, or else holdeth these great matters but as bare Opinions, and therefore they have no such interest in his heart, as to establish him against shaking tryals, and temptations: For two sorts there are of these *Opinionists*: the one sort have no Zeal for their own Opinions; because they are but Opinions: And these are time-servers; and will change, as the King, or their Land-lords change, and fit their Opinions to their worldly Ends. The other sort have a burning Zeal for their Opinions; and these use to wander from one Opinion to another, not able to resist the subtlety of seducers; but are taken with fair and plausible reasonings; not able to see into the heart of the cause. These are as Children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of Doctrine, by the slight, and

and cunning craftiness of men , whereby they lie in wait to deceive *Ephes. 4. 14.* When with great confidence they have held one sort of Opinions a while, and railed against those that were not of their mind, ere long they will themselves forsake them , and take up another way , and be as confident in that , and take no warning by the experience of their former deceit. And thus they go oft from one *Opinion* to another , till at last finding themselves deceived so oft , some of them cast off all Religion , and think there is no certainty to be found in any : Suspecting Religion , when they should have suspected their false hearts : And all this comes to pass because they never received the Truth in the love of it , that they might be Sanctified , and Saved by it , *2 Thes. 2. 10, 11, 12.* Nor ever gave it deep entertainment in their hearts , that it might throughly Convert them ; but took it as a bare Opinion into the brain to polish their tongues , and outsides , and deceive themselves as much as others.

And thus I have shewed you the difference between a sound Convert , and an Opinionist , or one that hath but an overly superficial Change , that you may see which of these is your own condition.

To return now to my Advice , and Exhortation , I intreat every person that readeth , or heareth these words , to see that they stick not in an Opinionative Conversion. To which End I further desire you 1. To consider that it is a higher matter , that Christ came into the world for , than to change mens bare Opinions , and it is a higher matter that the Gospel is intended for , and that Ministers are sent to you for. For it is more than a corruption of mens *Opinions* , that sin hath brought upon you ; and therefore it is a deeper disease that must be cured.

cured. The work of Christ by his Gospel, is no less, than to fetch you off all that which flesh and blood accounts your Happiness, and to unite you to himself, and make you Holy, as God is Holy, and to give you a new Nature, and make you as the dwellers or Citizens of Heaven, while you walk on Earth, *Phil. 3. 20, 21.* And these are greater matters than the changing of a Party, or Opinion. The Holy Ghost himself must dwell in you, and work in you, and employ your Soul, and life for God, that you may study him, and love him, and live to him here, and live with him for ever. Do but think well of the Ends, and meaning of the Gospel, and how much greater matters it drives at, and then you will see that there's no taking up with an Opinionative Religiousness.

2. Keep company, if it be possible with the most Sober, Spiritual, and Heavenly professors, that will be drawing you to the observation of your own heart, and life, and opening to you the riches of the Love of Christ, and winning up your affections to God, and Heaven: And be not the companions of unexperienced wranglers, that have no other Religion, but a Zeal for their Opinions, and will endeavour rather to make you like Satan, than like God, by possessing your minds with malice, and bitter thoughts of your brethren, and employing your tongues in reproaches, and vain strivings, and making you fire-brands in the places where you live: Neither be companions of them that hold the Truth no deeper than Opinion; For though some such may be useful to you in their places, yet if you have not more edifying familiars, your danger will be very great, lest you should let go the life of Religion, and take up with meer notions, and formalities as they.

3. When you have considered, that every Truth of God is a Message to your Hearts, as well as to your Heads,

Heads, and hath a work of God to do upon them, look after that work; and when you have heard, or read a Truth, go down into your Hearts, and see what it done there: And if you find not in your Will, and Resolutions, and Affections, the Image, and fruits of the Truth you have heard, fetch it up again, and ruminante upon it, and do not think you have received it, or done with it, till this be done: yea take it but as lost, and sinfully rejected, if it have not done you some good at the very Heart.

4. Also be sure that you Practise all practical Truths, upon the first opportunity, as soon as you have heard them. Imprison them not in unrighteousness. Cast them not out in forgetfulness; use not a Lecture of Divinity as if it were a lesson of Musick, or a meer Philosophical, or Historical discourse. Read not the Doctrine of Salvation, and the Promises of Heaven, and the fore-warnings of everlasting misery, as you read a common story, or a groundless conjecture in an Almanack: But as a message from God, which tells you where you must dwell for ever, and as a Direction sent from Heaven to teach you the way thither. Fall to work then, and practise what you know, if you would be Christians, indeed. *Be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.* For the Opinionative hearer seeth but a slight appearance of the Truth, as a man that looks on his face in a glass, which he quickly forgets: But he that is a Sound Believer, and practiser, and not only an Opinionative forgetful hearer, is the man that shall be blessed in his deed, *Jam. 1. 22, 23, 24, 25.* Opinion without Practice, is building on the *Sand*; but hearing, and sound Believing, and doing, is building upon the *Rock*, where the building will stand after all assaults. *Matth. 7. 26, 27, 28.* An Opinionist doth but seem to be *Religious*, while he keeps his reigning sins, and therefore his

his *Religion* is in vain : but the Practical *Religion*, is the pure, and undefiled *Religion*, Jam. 1. 26, 27. Hearty obedience will not only shew that your *Religion* is deeper than meer *Opinion*, but it will also advance it to a greater purity, and root it more deeply than it was before : A man that hath studied the Art of Navigation in his closet, may talk of it almost as well as he that hath been at sea ; but when he comes to practise it, he will find that he is far to seek : but let this man go to sea, and joyn practice and experience to his *Theory*, and then he may have a knowledge of the right kind. So if a man that hath only read over Military Books, would be a true Soldier, or a man that hath only studied *Phyfick*, would be a true *Physitian*, what better way is there, than to fall to Practice ? And so must you, if you would have a *Religion* that shall save your Souls ; and not only a *Religion* that will furnish you with good *Opinions*, and expressions.

5. Moreover, if you would get above *Opinion*, be still searching more and more after the Evidences of the ancient fundamental Truths that you have received ; and lay open your hearts to the power of them. Think it not enough that you take the Christian *Religion* for true, but labour after a *clearer sight* of its truth. For you may possibly upon some conjecture take it for a Truth, by bare *Opinion*, when as the sight of fuller Evidences, and a full sight of those Evidences, might raise you from *Opinion* to a working, saving *Faith*.

6. Lastly, take heed lest any thing be suffered to keep possession of your hearts, and so to confine the truth to your brain. When the world is kept up in life, and power, and is nearest the heart, there is no room for the Word there, but it must float upon the top, and swim in your *Opinion* ; because it can go no deeper, your lusts, and profits having possession before it. The Word can

can never go to the heart with unmortified men , but by casting your Idols out of your hearts : nor will it take rooting in you , but by rooting out the world.

O Sirs , if you knew the misery of a meer Opinionist , you would sure be perswaded now to practise these Directions , that may raise you higher. An Opinionist is a deceiver of himself , and oft of others : a troubler of the Church , if he have any Zeal for Opinions , and hit (as usually he doth) on the wrong ; And when his Religion is right , he is wrong himself , being out of the way , even when he is in the right way , because he is not right in that right way : For he doth but sit down in it , when he should travel it : A runner shall not win the prize by being in the right way only , unless he make haste. The knowledge of the Opinionist doth but serve to aggravate his sin ; and cause him to be beaten with many stripes ; but is not of force to Sanctifie his heart and life , and to save him : *1. Cor. 9. 2.* fully sheweth. Stick not therefore in an Opinionative Religiousnes.

Direct. IX. My next Direction that your Conversation may prove sound , is this , *Acquaint your Souls by Faith with the Glory of the Everlasting Kingdom , and see that you make it your Portion , and your End , and from thence let the rest of your endeavours be animated:*

No man can be a sound Christian , that knoweth not the Ends and Portion of a Christian. There is a great deal of difference between the desires of Heaven in a Sanctified man and an unsanctified. The Believer prizeth it above earth , and had rather be with God than here (Though death that stands in the way , may possibly have harder thoughts from him) But to the ungodly there is nothing seemeth more desirable than this world : and therefore he only chooseth Heaven before Hell ; but not

not before earth ; and therefore shall not have it upon such a choice. We hear of Gold and Silver mines in the Indies : If you offer a Golden mountain there, to an English man that hath an estate and family here, that are dear to him ; perhaps hee'll say, *I am uncertain whether their Golden mountains be not meer fictions to deceive men ; and if it be true that there are such things, yet it is a great way thither, and the seas are perilous ; and I am well enough already where I am, and therefore let who will go thither for me, I will stay at home as long as I can.* But if this man must needs be banished out of *England*, and had his choise whether he would go to the Golden Islands, or to dig in a cole-pit, or live in a wilderness, he would rather choose the better than the worse. So is it with an ungodly mans desires, in respect to this world, and that to come. If he could stay here, in fleshly pleasure, for ever, he would ; because he looks at Heaven as uncertain and a great way off, and the passage seemeth to him more troublesome, and dangerous than it is ; and he is where he would be already : But when he sees that there is no staying here for ever, but death will have him away, he had rather go to Heaven, than to Hell, and therefore will be Religious, as far as the flesh, and the world will give him leave, lest he should be cast into Hell, when he is taken from the Earth.

But take an English man that is in poverty, and reproach, and hath neither house, nor land, nor friend to comfort him, and let him have the offer of a Golden Island, and a person of unquestionable skilfulness, and fidelity, that will promise in short time to bring him safe thither, if he believe this person, and can put his trust in him, doubtles he will be gone and follow him over sea and land ; and though the passage may somewhat daunt him, yet the promised possession will carry

him through all. So is it with the true Christian; He is dead to this world, and sees nothing here in which he can be happy; he is burdened and wearied with sin and suffering; he is firmly persuaded of the Truth of the Gospel; and seeth by Faith the world that is to flesh invisible, and believeth in Jesus Christ who hath promised to convey him safely thither; and therefore he would away; and though he love not death, the stormy passage, yet he will submit to it, having so sure a Pilot, because he loves the life which through death he must pass into, and had rather be there than here.

Such a mans principal End is, such is the man, and such is the course of his life. He that takes this world for his Portion; and makes the felicity of it his end, is a carnal, worldly, unsanctified man, whatever good and godly actions may come in upon the by. It is he, and only he, that is a sanctified Believer who looks on heaven as his only Portion, and is sailing through the troublesome Seas of this world, of purpose to come to that desired harbour; not loving these seas better than the Land of Rest, which he is sailing to; but patiently and painfully passing through them, because there is no other way to Glory. As it is the desire of the Land to which he is sailing, that moveth the Mariner or passenger to do all that he doth in his Voyage, and the desire of his home or journeys End, that moveth the traveller all the way; and the desire of seeing a perfect Building that moveth the builder in every stroke of his Work; so it must be the love of God, and the desire after everlasting blessedness, that must be the very Engine to move the rest of the affections and endeavours of the Saints, and must make men resolve on the necessary labour and patience of Believers. Take off this weight, and all the motions of Christianity will cease. No man will be at labour and sufferings for nothing,

if

if he can avoid them. It is a life of Labour, though sweet to the Spirit, yet tedious to the flesh, which Christianity doth engage us in; and there is much suffering to be undergone; and this to the very last, and to the denial of our selves; and, if God require it, to the loss of all the comforts of the world: for no less than *forsaking all* that we have will serve to make us Christs Disciples. And will any man do this for he knows not what? Will any man forsake all that he hath, unless it be for something better, which may be as sure to him as that he had, and may make him more happy? Look to it therefore that you have right and believing thoughts of Heaven, and that unfeignedly you take it for your Home and Happiness, and look not for any other Portion. *Till you see so much of the certainty and excellency of Everlasting Glory, as shall prevail with you to lay out your faithful labour for it, and to be at a point with all this world, as having laid up your Treasure and Hopes in the world to come, you have no ground to conclude that you are true Christian Converts.*

Seeing therefore that its Heaven that is the very Reason, the End, the Life of all your Religion, it follows that you must necessarily *understand* somewhat of its excellency, and *believe* its certainty, and accordingly *set your hearts upon it*, and make the attainment of it your daily work, and business in the world: This is to be a Convert indeed.

Remember therefore first what I told you before wherein the nature of this Blessedness doth consist. I will only name the Essentials of it, that your apprehensions may be right, and forbear to say much, as being done already.

I. The first thing considerable in our Everlasting Blessedness, will be our *personal Perfection of the whole man*;

man; This is in order to the Perfection of our Ever-lasting Operations and Enjoyments. Our bodies shall be no more flesh and blood, nor corruptible, or mortal, or subject to hunger, or pain, or weariness, nor to passions that rebel against the reasonable soul: but they shall be spiritual bodies, and Immortal, and Incorruptible and undefiled. Our Souls will be perfected in their Natural Perfections, and in their Moral. They shall be of more advanced Understanding, and comprehensive Wisdom than now: Our wills shall attain to perfect rectitude in a perfect conformity to the Will of God, and every affection shall be brought to its perfect order and elevation: All sin shall be done away, whether it were in the understanding, will, affections, or the actions. The executive power will be answerable to the rest of the Perfections, and to the blessed work which it hath to do: And thus we shall be like the Angels of God.

2. The next thing considerable in our Blessedness is, our *approximation or approach to God*: We shall be admitted into the holiest, and brought as near him as our natures are capable of, and we are fit for.

3. Moreover, we shall be *Members of the new Jerusalem*, and receive our Glory in Communion with that blessed Society, and so as members contribute to her Glory.

4. And we shall *behold the glorified Person of our Redeemer*, and he will be glorified on us as the fruits of his Victory.

5. And we shall *behold the face of the blessed God*, and see his wisdom, and power and glory, and know as we are known. Though we cannot now fully know the manner, yet in that sense as our Angels are said to *behold the face of God*, Matt. 18.10. we also shall behold it.

6. We

6. We shall also *enjoy him in the nearest relation*, and by the most raised vigorous affections of our soul: We shall be filled with his *Love* as full as we can hold, and we shall abound with perfect *Love to him* again: And the *Joy* that is in his presence, which this Intuition and Everlasting *Love* will afford us, is such as no heart is here able to conceive.

7. Being thus furnished, we shall be *employed in his perfect Praises*, in singing and rejoicing to him with the heavenly Host, and Magnifying his great and holy Name.

8. And in *all this will the Glory of God shine forth*, and he will be admired in his *Saints*, 2 Thes. 1. 10, 11. In us it shall appear how abundant he is in power, and wisdom, and goodness, in holiness, faithfulness and righteousness.

9. And *God himself will be well pleased with us*, and with the new *Jerusalem* and his glorified *Son*, and will take complacence in this manifestation and *Communication of his Glory and of himself unto his Creatures*. And this is his Ultimate End, and should be the highest point of ours. The Revolution hath now brought all to that Center, which is both the *Alpha and Omega*, the beginning and the end. His Will is the fountain or Efficient of all; and it is the Ultimate End and Perfect-on of all.

There is no more to add, as to the *Matter*, but that as to the *Duraction*, first we may take it as that which leaves no room for any Addition, that *all this will be everlasting*, leaving not any doubts, or fears of a Cessation. Abundance of glorious adjuncts of this felicity might be mentioned; but I pass them all by, and do but name these few which are the Essential Constitutive parts of our Happiness, because I have touched them before, and fullyer spoken of them in the *Saints Rest*. Thus

much I thought meet to mention here, that you may have somewhat of that in your eye that I am persuading you to intend and seek; and the rather, because I perceive that many of the godly have not such distinct Apprehensions of the constitutive parts of this Felicity, as they should have; but much wrong their souls, and God himself, and the Glory of their Profession, by looking but at some of the parts.

Believe God sirs that this is the life that you shall live, if you will take it for your Portion, and set your hearts upon it, and follow the Conduct of Christ for the obtaining it. Can you be content with Heaven alone? Is it enough for you, though you be despised and persecuted in the world? Do you account this for certainty and excellency to be worth all? Yea, that all is dross and dung to this. Thus must you do if you will be true Converts. For all such are heavenly in their minds and hearts, and in the drift of all their lives and Conversations.

Direct. X. My next advice that you may prove sound Converts, is this, [Rest not, and count not your selves truly converted, till God and his holy Ways have your very Love, and Desire, and Delight: and take not that for a saving Change, when you had rather live a worldly ungodly life, if it were not for the fear of punishment.]

I shall speak but little of this, because I toucht upon it before, when I told you that Christ must have your hearts, and because it is but a confection of the last, or contained in it. But yet I think it best to present it here distinctly to your Consideration, because a slavish kind of religiousness, doth deceive so many; and because the life of Grace is here express. I deny not but *holy Fear* is exceeding useful to us: even a Fear of the Threatnings

Threatnings and Judgements of God. But yet I must tell you, that in *Fear* there is much more that is common to the unsanctified, than there is in *Love*, *Desire* and *Delight*. Though the *Fear of God* be the beginning of *wisdom*, it is *Love* that is the *Perfection*: and that *Fear* is not filial, and of the right strain, if love be not its Companion. *Fear* of punishment shews that you love your *natural selves*: but it shews not that you *love God*, and are true-hearted to him. The Devils fear and tremble, but they do not *Love*. It is *Love* and not *Fear* that is the *Byas*, the *Inclination*; and, as I may say, the *Nature* of the will of man. By his *Love* it is that you must know what the man is. The Philosopher saith, [*Such as a man is, such is his end*] which is all one as to say. [*Such as a man is, such is his Lover*.] You may Fear a thing at the same time when you hate it: and its too *common* to have some hatred mixt with *Fear*. You may be as much against God and his holy ways, when *Fear* only drives you to some kind of religiosity as others are that scarce meddle with Religion at all. The first thing that God looks at is, what you *would do*, and the next is, what you *do*. If you do it, but had rather leave it undone, you lose your reward, and God will take it as if you had not done it: For it was not you that did it, if you did it not from *Love*; but it was *Fear* that dwelleth in you. God takes mens hearty Desires and Will, in stead of the *Deed*, where they have not power to fulfil it: But he never took the bare *Deed* instead of the *Will*. A blockish kind of worship, consisting in outward actions, without the heart, is fit to be given to a wooden god, a senseless Idol: but the true and living God abhors it. He is a Spirit, and will be worshipped in Spirit and in Truth: such worshippers he seeketh, and such he will accept, *Joh. 4.23,24*. A beggar will be glad of your Almes, though you leave it with

an ill will, because he needeth it, but God hath no need of you, nor of your service, and therefore think not that he will accept you on such terms. That people worshippeth God in vain, that draw near him with their mouth, and honour him with their lips, when their heart is far from him, *Matt, 15, 8, 9.* A mans heart is where his *Love* is, rather than where his *Fear* is. If you should lie still upon your knees; or in the holy Assembly; If you should be the strictest Observer of the Ordinances on the Lords days; and yet had such hearts in you, as had rather let all these alone, if it were not for fear of punishment; it will all be disregarded, and reckoned to you according to your wills, as if it had never been done by you at all. Its Love that must win *Love*, or make you fit for *Love* to entertain. If you give your goods to the poor, or your bodies to be burned in a cause that in it self is good, and yet have not *Love*, it availeth nothing, *1 Cor, 13, 1, 2, 3, 5,* You will not think your Wife hath conjugal affections that loveth another man better than you, and had rather be gone from you, if she could live without you. Its an unnatural Son that loves not his Father, but had rather be from him, than with him. If God called you to a ~~base~~ drudgery or slavery, he would then look but for your work, and not care much whether you be willing or unwilling. If your Ox draw your plow, and your Horse carry his burden, you care not much whether it be willingly or unwillingly. Or if it be an enemy that you have to deal with, you will look for no more than a forced submission, or that he be disabled from doing you hurt. But this is not your case: It is a state of friendship that the Gospel calls you to; you must be nigh to God, his Children: and the Members of his Son; espoused to him in the dearest strongest bonds; And do you think it is possible that this should be

be done without your wills and affections? If you can be content with the *Portion* of a *slave* and an *enemy*, then do your *task*, and deny God your *affections*: But if you look for the entertainment and *Portion* of a *Friend*, a *Child*, a *Spouse*; you must bring the *heart* of a *Friend*, and of a *Child*, and of a *Spouse*. Fear may do good by driving you to the use of means; and taking out of your hands the things by which you would do your selves a mischief: It may *prepare* you for saving *Grace*; and when you are *Sanctified*, it will prove a necessary servant of *Love*, to keep you in awe, and save you from temptations. But *Love* is the ruling affection in the *Sanctified*; and fear is therefore necessary because of the present imperfection of *Love*, and because of the variety of temptations that here beset us: Think not therefore that you are savingly renewed, till God have your very hearts. When you do but believe and tremble, it is better than to be unbelieving, and stupid, and secure; but you are not true Christians till you believe and *Love*. We use to fly from that which we fear, and therefore do apprehend it to be evil to us. We avoid the presence and company of those that we are afraid of, but we draw nigh them that we love, and delight in their company. We *Fear* an *Enemy*: We *Love* a *Friend*: We *fear* the *Devil* naturally; but we do not *Love* him: It is *Love* that is that *Affection* of the soul that entertaineth God as God, even as *Good*: though that *Love* must be accompanied with a filial fear, even a dread and reverence of his *Majesty* and greatness, and a fear of displeasing him. If you should toil out your selves in *Religious* *duties*, with a heart that had rather forbear them if you durst, you have not the hearts of *Gods Children* in your breasts. The *Magistrate* can *frighten* men to the *Congregation* and outward worship: You may lock a man in the *Church*, that had rather be away:

away : And will any man think that this makes him acceptable to God ? You may keep a Thief from stealing by prison and irons ; but this makes him not accepted with God as a true man : You may cure a man of cursing, and swearing, and railing, and idle and ribbald talking, even in a minute of an hour, by cutting off his tongue : but will God accept him ever the more as long as he hath a heart that would do it if he could ? There's abundance of people at this day that are kept from abusing the Lords day, and from swearing, and stealing, yea and from laying hands on all about them that are godly, and this by the Law of man, and the fear of present punishment ; And do you think that these are therefore innocent or acceptable with God ? By this account you may make the Devil a Saint, when he is chained up from doing mischief : You may as well say, that a Lion is become a Lamb, when he is shut up in his Den : Or that a mastiff Dog is become harmless and gentle, when he is muzzled. Believe it Sirs, you are never Christians, till you see that in God that wins your hearts to him, so that you would not change your Master for any in the world, and till you see that in the hopes of Everlasting Glory, that you would not change it for any thing else that can be imagined by the heart of man ; And till you see that goodness in a Heavenly life ; that you had rather live it, than any life in the world : You are not converted to God indeed, till you had rather live in Holiness than in Sin, if you had your freest choice, and till you would gladly be the strictest holiest persons that you know in the world ; and long after more and more of it ; and fain would reach Perfection it self : For though we cannot be perfect here, yet no man is upright that desireth not to be perfect. For he that loveth Holiness as Holiness, must needs love the greatest measure of Holiness, with the greatest

greatest Love. This is it that maketh sound **Converts** to be so faithful and constant with **God**; A man is forward and ready to a work that he loves; when he draws back from it, as if it were a mischief, that hath no mind to do it. A man is hardly kept from the persons, and places, and employments that he loves: but a little will withdraw him from that which he loveth not. Why is it that we have so much ado to take off a Drunkard from his Companions and his lusts, but because he loves them better than temperance and gracious company? And why can we so hardly draw the lustful wretch from his filthy lusts, or the glutton, or the idle sensual person from his needless or excessive recreations, but because they love them? And why is it that you cannot draw the worldling from his covetousness, but he parteth with his money almost as hardly as with his blood, but because he loveth it? And therefore what wonder if temptations be resisted, and the fairest baits of the world despised, by him that is truly in Love with God: No wonder if nothing can turn back that man from the way to Heaven, that is in Love both with Heaven and with the Way. No wonder if that man stick close to Christ, and never forsake a holy life, that tasteth the sweetness of it, and feels it to do him good: and had rather go that way than any in the world. There is no true Christian but can say with *David*, that *a day in Gods Courts is better than a thousand*; and he had rather be a *door-keeper in the house of God, than to dwell in the tents* [yea, or the Palaces] *of wickedness*. Do but mark those professors that prove Apostates, and forsake the way of godliness which they seemed to embrace, and see whether they be not such as either took up some bare Opinions and outward Duties, upon a flash of superficial illumination, or else such as were frightned into a course of Religion, and so

went

went on from duty to duty for fear of being damned, when all the while their hearts were more another way, and they had rather have been excused. These Hypocrites are they that are disputing so oft the Obligations to their Duty, and asking, How do you prove that it is a Duty to pray in my Family; or a Duty to observe the Lords Day, or to come constantly to the Congregation; or to use the Communion of the godly in private meetings, or to repeat Sermons, or sing Psalms, and the like? Intimating that they are as birds in a Cage, ~~in~~ ⁱⁿ Hens in a Pen that are boaring to get out, and had rather be at liberty: If it were not for the fear of the Law of God that is upon them, they had rather let a¹ these Duties alone, or take them up but now and then at an idle time, when Satan and the flesh will give them leave. If a Feast be prepared and spread before them, a good stomach will not stand to ask, How can you prove it my duty to eat? but perhaps the sick that loath it, may do so. If the Cup be before the Drunkard, he doth not stand on those terms [How do you prove it my duty now to drink this Cup, and the other Cup] No, if he might have but leave, he would drink on, without any questioning whether it be a duty; If the Gamester, or the Whoremonger, might but be sure that he should scape the punishment, he would never stick at the want of a Precept, and ask, Is it my duty? If there were but a gift of twenty pound a man, to be given to all the poor of the Town, yea and to all the people in general, I do not think I should meet with many people in the Town that would draw back and say, What Word of God commandeth me to take it? Or how can you prove that it is my duty? And why is all this? but because they have an inward Love to the thing; and Love will carry a man to that which seemeth good for him, without any command, or threatening. If these ungodly

ungodly wretches had one spark of spiritual life within them, and any taste and feeling of the matters that concern their own salvation, instead of asking, How can you prove that I *must* pray with my Family, or that I *must* keep the Lords day, or that I *must* converse with the godly, and live a holy life? they would be readier to say, How can you prove that I *may not* pray with my Family? and that I may not sanctifie the Lords Day? and that I may not have communion with the Saints in Holines? Seeing so great a mercy is offered to the world, why may not I partake of it as well as others? I can perceive in many that I converse with, the great difference between a heart that loves God and Holines, and a heart that seems religious and honest without such a Love; The true Convert perceiveth so much sweetnes in holy duties, and so much spiritual advantage by them to his Soul, that he is loth to be kept back; he cannot spare these Ordinances and Mercies, no more than he can spare the bread from his mouth, or the cloaths from his back; yea, or the skin from his flesh, no nor so much. He loveth them; he cannot live without them; at the worst that ever he is at, he had rather be holy than unholy, and live a godly than a fleshly worldly life. And therefore if he had but a bare leave from God, without a Command, to sanctifie the Lords Day, and to live in the holy Communion of the Saints, he would joyfully take it with many thanks: For he need not be driven to his rest when he is weary, nor to his spiritual food when he is hungry, nor to Christ the refuge of his soul, when the curse and accuser are pursuing him. But the unsanctified hypocrite, that never loved God or Godliness in his heart, he stands questioning and enquiring for some proof of a necessity of these courses. And if he can but bring himself to hope that God will save him without so much

much ado (which by the help of the Devil he may easily be brought to hope ,) away then goes the duty : If you could not shew him that there is a *Necessity* of Family Prayer, and a *Necessity* of sanctifying the Lords Day, and a *Necessity* of forsaking his tipling and voluptuousnes , and a *Necessity* of living a heavenly life , he would quickly resolve of another course : For he had rather do otherwise , if he durst . He never was Religious from a true Predominant Love to God and a holy life , but for *fear* of Hell , and for other inferiour respects .

Remember this when you have precious opportunities before you , of doing or receiving good , and when you see that you have leave to take these opportunities , and yet you draw back , and are questioning , How we can prove it to be your duty ; or that you cannot be saved without it ? Do not these Questions plainly shew that you Love not the work , and Delight not in a holy life ; and that you had rather let it alone ? Are you not blind if you see not this is in your selves ? Yea , its plain that you have such an aversenes or hatred to God and a holy course of life , that if you did but know what shift to make to scape damnation , you would fly away from God and Holiness , and have as little to do with them as you can . Your Questions and Cavils do plainly declare this wicked enmity and backwardness of your hearts : and consequently shew how far you are from true Conversion .

Not that I am of their mind that think there is any Good which the Law of Christ Obligeth us not to accept , and which we can refuse without sin and danger to our selves : For G d doth both draw us , and drive us at once . But when the Threatning and Punishment only can prevail with men , and men Love not God and Godliness for themselves , but had rather have liberty

to live as the ungodly, I shall never take one of these for a sanctified man, nor have any hope of the saving of such a soul, how far soever his fears may carry him from his outward sins, or to outward duties: Till God shall give him a better Conversion than this, I say, I have not the smallest hope of this mans salvation. Then you are Gods Children, when the Hohour, the Work, the Family, the Name of your Father are lovely and delightful to you: And when you grieve that there is any remnants of sin in your souls; and when your sins are to you as lameness to the lame, that pain them every step they go; and as sickness to the sick, that makes them groan, and groan again, and long to be rid of it: And when you think those the happiest men on earth that are the most holy, and wish from your hearts that you were such as they, though you had not a house to put your head in: When you look toward God with longing thoughts, and are grieved that your understandings can reach no nearer him, and know no more of him, and that your hearts cannot embrace him with a more burning Love: When you admire the beauty of a meek, a patient, a mortified, spiritual, heavenly mind, and long to have more of this your self, yea to be perfect in all Holiness and Obedience: When your hearts are thus brought over to God, that you had rather have him than any other, and rather live in his Family than any where, and rather walk in his ways than in any, then are you indeed Converted, and never till then, whatever other dispositions you may have.

10 And now if that were my busines, what abundance of reason might I shew you, to make you willing to come over unto God, with Love, and with Delight. Whom else can you Love, if he that is Love it self seem not lovely to you? All loveliness is in him and from him:

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The creature hath none of it self, nor for it self: To Love a life of sin, is to Love the Image and Service of the Devil, and to Love that which feeds the flames of Hell, What is it then to Love this sin so well, as for the Love of it to fly from God and Godliness? Methinks men at the worst should Love that which will do them good, and not prefer that before it which will hurt them. Do sinners indeed believe that God and Holiness will do them hurt, and that sin will do them greater good? Is there ever a man so mad that he dare speak this and stand to it? If indeed you think it best to live in sin, and therefore had rather keep it than leave it, your understandings are befooled, I had almost used *Paul's* Phrase, and said, *bewitched*, Gal. 3. 1. Will it do you any hurt to leave your beastly sensual lives, and to live soberly, righteously, and godly in the world, denying ungodliness and worldly lusts, and looking for the blessed hope, and the glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ? This is the Doctrine of Saving Grace, Tit. 2. 11, 12, 13. Would it do you any harm to be assured of Salvation, and ready to die, and to know that the Angels shall Conduct your departing souls to Christ, and that you shall live in Joy with him for ever? Or to be employed in those holy works that must prepare you for this day, and help you to this assurance? If God be naught for you, if Holiness, and Righteousness, and Temperance be naught for you, then you may as well say, Heaven is naught for you; and therefore you must resolve for sin and Hell, and see whether that be good for you. I shall say no more of this Point, because I have written of it already, in the Conclusion of the *Saints Rest*, which I desire you to peruse.

Direct.

Direct. XI. The next part of my Advice is, *If you would not have this Saving Work miscarry, Turn then this present day and hour, without any more Delay.*

Somewhat I have spoken of this already, and therefore shall say the less. But yet I shall back this Direction with such Reasons as will certainly convince you, if you be not unreasonable, of the folly of Delay, and shew you that it concerneth you presently to Return. And though my Reasons will be numerous, it is not the Number but the Strength of them that I shall urge you principally to Consider; and because of the Number, I will go over them with the greater brevity.

1. *Consider to whom it is that you are commanded to Turn:* and then tell me whether there can be any Reason for delay. It is not to an empty deceitful creature, but to the faithful All-sufficient God: To him that is the cause of all things; the Strength of the Creation; the Joy of Angels; the Felicity of the Saints; the Sun and Shield of all the Righteous, and Refuge of the Distressed; and the Glory of the whole World. Of such Power, that his Word can take down the Sun from the Firmament, and turn the Earth and all things into nothing; for he doth more in giving them their being and continuance. Of such Wisdom, that was never guilty of mistake, and therefore will not mislead you, nor draw you to any thing that is not for the best. Of such Goodness, as that evil cannot stand in his sight; and nothing but your evil could make him displeased with you; and it is from nothing but evil that he calleth you to Turn. It is not to a malicious Enemy, that would do you a mischief, but it is to a gracious God, that is Love it self: Not to an implacable Justice, but to a reconciled Father; not to revenging Indignation, but to the embracement of those

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Arms, and the Mercy of that compassionate Lord, that is enough to melt the hardest heart, when you find yourself as the poor returning Prodigal, *Luke 25. 20.* in his bosom, when you deserved to have been under his feet. And will the great and blessed God invite thee to his favour, and wilt thou delay and demur upon the Return? The greatest of the Angels of Heaven are glad of his favour, and value no happiness but the light of his countenance: Heaven and Earth are supported by him, and nothing can stand without him: How glad would those very Devils be of his favour, that tempt thee to neglect his favour: And wilt thou delay to turn to such a God? Why, man, thou art every minute at his mercy; If thou turn not, he can throw thee into Hell when he will, more easily than I can throw this Book to the ground; And yet dost thou delay? There are all things imaginable in him to draw thee: there is nothing that is good for thee, but it is perfectly in him; where thou maist have it certain and perpetuated. There is nothing in him to give the least discouragement: Let all the Devils in Hell, and all the enemies of God on Earth, say the worst they can against his Majesty; and they are not able to find the smallest blemish in his absolute Holiness, and Wisdom, and Goodness: And yet wilt thou delay to Turn?

2. Consider also, as to *Whom, so to what it is that thou maist turn.* Not to uncleanness, but unto Holiness: not to the sensual life of a Beast, but to the Noble rational life of a man, and the more Noble Heavenly life of a Believer. Not to an unprofitable worldly toil, but to the gainful ~~and~~ Employment that ever the Sons of men were acquainted with: Not to the deceitful drudgery of sin, but to that *Godliness which is profitable to all things, having the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come,* *1 Tim. 4. 8.* Sirs, Do you know what a life of Holiness is? You do not know it, if you turn away

away from it : I am sure if you knew it, you would never fly from it, no nor endure to live without it. Why, a life of Holiness is nothing but a living unto God : to be conversant with him, as the wicked are with the world ; and to be devoted to his Service, as sensualists are to the flesh. It is to live in the Love of God and our Redeemer ; and in the foreasts of his Everlasting Glory, and of his Love : and in the sweet forethoughts of that blessed life that shall never end : and in the honest self-denying course that leadeth to that blessedness. A godly life is nothing else but a sowing the Seed of Heaven on Earth ; and a learning in the School of Christ, the Songs of praise which we must use before the Throne of God ; and by *suffering*, a learning how to Triumph and reign with Christ. And is there any thing in this life which you have cause to be afraid of ? The sins and weaknesses of the godly are contrary to Godliness ; and therefore Godliness is no more dishonoured by them, than health and life is dishonoured by your sicknesses. As health is never the worse to be liked but the better, because of the painful grievousness of sickness ; so Godliness is to be liked the better, because the very failings of the Saints are so grievous. If a true Believer do but step out of the way of God, he is wounded, he is out of joyn, he is as undone till he come in again ; though it was but in one particular. And can you endure to continue strangers to it altogether so long ? I know you may find faults in the godly, till they are perfect : but let the most malicious Enemy of Christ on Earth find any fault in Godliness if he can.

Can you delay to come into your Fathers Family ; into the Vineyard of the Lord ; into the Kingdom of God on Earth ; to be fellow Citizens of the Saints, and of the Household of God ; to have the Pardon of all your Sins, and the sealed Promise of Everlasting Glory ? Why Sirs, when you are called on to Turn,

you are called to the Porch of Heaven, into the beginning of Salvation: And will you delay to accept Everlasting life?

3. Consider also *from what you are called to Turn*: and then judge whether there be any reason of delay. It is from the Devil your Enemy: from the love of a deceitful world; from the sedulement of corrupted bruitish flesh; it is from sin the greatest evil; What is there in sin that you should delay to part with it? Is there any good in it? Or what hath it ever done for you that you should love it? Did it ever do you good? Or did it ever do any man good? It is the deadly enemy of Christ and you, that caused his death, and will cause yours, and is working for your damnation, if converting and pardoning Grace prevent it not; And are you loath to leave it? It is the cause of all the miseries of the world, of all the sorrow that ever did befall you, and the cause of the damnation of them that perish: And do you delay to part with it?

4. Your *Delaying sheweth that you Love not God, and that you prefer your sin before him, and that you would never part with it if you might have your will.* For if you loved God, you would long to be restored to his favour, and to be near him, and employed in his service and his Family. Love is quick and diligent, and will not draw back. And it is a sign also that you are in-love with sin; For else why should you be so loath to leave it? He that would not leave his sin and turn to God, till the next week, or the next Month or year, would never turn if he might have his desire. For that which makes you desirous to stay a day or week longer, doth indeed make you loath to turn at all. And therefore it is but hypocrisy to take on you, that you are willing to turn hereafter, if you be not willing to do it now without delay.

5. Consider but what a Case you are in while you thus delay. Do you think you stand on dry ground, or in a safe condition? If you knew where you are, you would sit as upon thorns as long as you are unconverted, you would be as a man that stood up to the knees in the Sea, and saw the tide coming towards him: who certainly would think that there's no standing still in such a place. Read what I have said of the state of the unconverted, in my first Treatise of Conversion. In a word, you are the drudges of sin, the slaves of the Devil, the enemies of God, the abusers of his Grace and Spirit, the despisers of Christ, the heirs of Hell. And is this a state to stay in an hour? You have all your sin unpardon'd; you are under the Curse of the Law; the Wrath of God is upon you; and the fulness of it hangs over your heads; Judgement is coming to pass upon you the dreadful doom; the Lord is at hand; death is at the door, and waits but for the Word from the mouth of God, that it may arrest you, and bring you to Everlasting misery: And is this a state for a man to stay in?

6. Moreover, *Your Delaying giveth great advantage to the Tempter.* If you would presently turn and forsake your sins, and enter a faithful Covenant with God, the Devil would be almost out of hope, and the very heart of his temptations would be broken: He would see that now it is too late: there's no getting you out of the arms of Christ. But as long as you delay, you keep him still in heart and hope; He hath time to strengthen his prison and fetters; and to renew his snares; and if one temptation serve not, he hath time to try another, and another: As if you would stand as a mark for Satan to shoot at, as long as he please. What likelihood is there that ever so foolish a sinner should be recovered and saved from his sin?

7. Moreover, Your Delaying is a vile abuse of Christ, and the holy Ghost, and may so far provoke him, as to leave you to your self, and then you are past help. If you delight so to trample on your crucified Lord, and will so long put him to it by your refusing his Grace, and grieving his Spirit; What can you expect but that he should turn away in wrath, and utterly forsake you, and say, [Let him keep his sin, seeing he had rather have it than my Grace; Let him continue ungodly, seeing he is so loath to be sanctified; let him take his own course, and die in his sin, and repent in Hell, seeing he would not repent on Earth?] You provoke Christ thus to give you up.

8. Consider also I beseech you, if you ever mean to turn, what it is that you stay for. Do you think to bring down Christ and Heaven to lower rates, and to be saved hereafter with less ado? Sure you cannot be so foolish: For God will be still the same, and Christ the same; and his Promise hath still the same Condition, which he will never Change; and Godliness will be the same, and as much against your carnal interest hereafter as it is now. When you have looked about you never so long, you'll never find a fairer or nearer way; but this same way you must go or perish. If you cannot leave sin now, how should you leave it then? It will be still as sweet to your flesh as now: Or if one sin grow stale by the decay of nature, another that's worse will spring up in its stead, and though the acts abate, they will all live still at the root; for sin was never mortified by age. So that if ever you will turn, you may best turn now.

9. Yea more than that; The longer you stay, the harder will be. If it be hard to day, it is like to be harder to morrow. For as the Spirit of Christ is like to forsake you for your wilful delayes, so custom will strengthen sin: and custom in sinning will harden your hearts, and

and make you as past feeling, to work all uncleanness with greediness, *Eph. 4. 19.* Cannot you crush this Serpent when it is but in the Spawn ; and can you encounter it in its Serpentine strength ? Cannot you pluck up a tender Plant, and can you pluck up an Oak or Cedar ? O sinners, what do you do, to make your recovery so difficult by delay ? You are never like to be fairer for Heaven, and to find Conversion an easier work, than now you may do. Will you stay till the work be ten times harder, and yet do you think it so hard already ?

10. Consider also, That *sin gets daily Victories by your delay.* We lay our batteries against it, and preach, and exhort, and pray against it, and it gets a kind of victory over all, as long as we prevail not with you to turn. It conquereth our persuasions and advice : It conquereth all the stirrings of your Consciences : It conquereth all your heartless purposes, and deceitful Promises. And these frequent Conquests do strengthen your sin, and weaken your resistance, and leave the matter almost hopeless. Before a Physician hath used remedies, he hath more hope of a cure, than when he hath tried all means, and finds that the best medicines do no good, but the man is still as bad or worse. So when all means have been tried with you, and yet you are unconverted, the case draws towards desperation it self : The very means are disabled more than before ; that is, your hearts are unapt to be wrought upon by them ; When you have long been under Sermons, and Reading, and among good examples, and yet you are unconverted, these Ordinances lose much of their force with you : Custom will make you slight them, and be dead hearted under them. And it is these very same Means and Truths that you have frustrated, that must do the work, or it will never be done. The same Plaster must heal you, that you have thrown off so oft ; And what a sad case is this, that there is no hope

left, but in the very same Medicine which you have taken so oft in vain,

11. Moreover, *Age it self hath many inconveniences, and youth hath many great advantages: and therefore it is folly to delay.* In age the understanding and memory grows dull, and people grow uncapable, and almost unchangeable, We see by our every dayes experience, that men think they should not change when they are old: that opinion or practice that they have been brought up in, they think that they should not then forsake: To learn when they are old, and to turn when they are old, you see how much they are against it. Besides, how unfit is age to be at that pains, that you can undergo? How unfit to begin the holy Warfare against the flesh, the world, and Devil? Gods way is to list his Souldiers as soon as may be; even in their infancy; which they must own as soon as ever they come to age: And the Devil would not have it done at all: and therefore he would have it put off as long as may be: In infancy he will tell the Parents, with the Anabaptists, It is too soon to be dedicated to God, and entred into his Covenant: when they come to their childhood, and youthful state, he will then perswade them that it is yet too soon; and when he can no longer perswade them that it is yet too soon, he will then perswade them that it is too late, O what a happy thing it is to come unto God betimes, and with the first! What advantage hath youth? They have the vigour of wit and of body: They be not rooted and hardned in sin, nor filled with prejudice and obstinacy against Godliness, as others be. Besides, the capacity of serving God, of which anon.

12. You ha: e such times of advantage and encouragement as few ages of the world have ever seen, and few Nations on Earth do en: joy at this day. What plain and plentifull teaching have you? What abundance of good examples:

examples : and the society of the godly ? private and publick helps are common. Godliness is under as little suffering as ever you can expect to see it : yea, it is grown into reputation among us ; so that it is an honour to serve God, and a dishonour to neglect it (as well it may.) Our Rulers countenance the Practices of Godliness : they proclaim themselves the forward Professors and Patrons of it, and take this as their Glory. And this is not ordinary in the world. Seldom hath the Church seen such dayes on Earth. And *yet* is not the way to Heaven fair enough for you ? *Yet* are you not ready to turn to God ? When should men make Hay but when the Sun shines ? Will you delay till this harvest time be over, and the Winter of persecution come again ? Can you better turn to God, when a godly life is the common scorn of the Countrey, as it was a while ago ? and when every one will be deriding and railing at you ? Or when it may possibly cost you your lives ? Have you Sun, and wind, and tide to serve you, and will you stay to set out in storms and darkness ?

13. Moreover, *Your delay doth cast your Conversion and Salvation upon hazard, yea upon many and grievous hazards.* And is your Everlasting happiness a matter to be wilfully hazarded, by causeless and unreasonable delays ? 1. If you delay to day, you are utterly uncertain of living till to morrow. If you put by this one motion, you know not whether ever you shall have another. Alas, that ever the heart of man should be so sensless, as to delay, when they know not but it may prove their damnation ; and when Heaven or Hell must certainly follow ; that they dare put off a day or hour, when they know not whether ever they shall see another. 2. And as your life is uncertain, so are the means uncertain by which God useth to do the work. He may remove your Teachers, and other helps ; and then

then you will be farther off than before. 3. And if both should continue, yet Grace it self is uncertain. You know not whether ever the Spirit of God will put another thought of turning into your hearts: Or at least whether he will give you hearts to turn.

14. Moreover, *The delay of Conversion continueth your sin, and so you will daily increase the number, and increase your guilt, and make your souls more abundantly miserable.* Are you not deep enough in debt to God already, and have you not yet sins enough to answer for upon your Souls? Would you fain have one years sins more, or one dayes sins more to be charged upon you? If you did but know what sin is, it would amaze you to think what a mountain lyeth already upon your Consciences. One sin unpardoned will sink the stoutest sinner into Hell: And you have many a thousand upon your souls already: and would you yet have more? Methinks you should rather look about you, and bethink you how you may get a pardon for all that's past.

15. And as *sin increaseth daily by delay, so consequently the Wrath of God increaseth; you will run further into his displeasure,* and possibly you may cut down the bough that you stand upon, and hasten even bodily destruction to your selves. When you live daily upon God, and are kept out of Hell, by a miracle of his mercy, methinks you should not desire yet longer to provoke him, lest he withdraw his Mercy, and let you fall into misery.

16. And do but consider, what *will become of you, if you be found in these delays.* You are then lost body and Soul for ever. Now if you had but hearts to know what is good for you, the worst of you might be converted, and saved; for God doth freely offer you his Grace. But if you dye in your delayes, in the twinkling of an eye you will find your selves utterly undone for ever. Now there is hope of a change, but when delays have brought

brought you to Hell, there is no more change, nor no more hope.

17. Consider, that your *very time which you lose by these delays, is an unconceivable loss.* When time is gone, what would you then give for one of those years, or dayes, or hours, which now you foolishly trifle away? O wretched sinners; are there so many thousand Souls in Hell, that would give a world if they had it, for one of your dayes; and yet can you afford to throw them away, in worldliness, and sensuality, and loitering delays? I tell you, Time is better worth, than all the wealth and honours of the world. The day is coming when you will ~~set by~~ time: When it is gone you will know what a blessing you made light of. But then all the world cannot call back one day or hour of this precious time, which you can sacrifice now to the service of your flesh, and cast away on unprofitable sinning.

18. Consider also that *God hath given you no time to spare.* He hath not lent you one day or hour, more than is needful for the work that you have to do, and therefore you have no reason to lose any by your delays. Do you imagine that God would give a man an hours time for nothing; much less, for to abuse him, and serve his enemy. No, let me tell you, that if you make your best of every hour; if you should never lose a minute of your lives, you would find all little enough for the work you have to do. I know not how others think of time, but for my part I am forced daily to say, *How swift, how short is time? and how great is our work; and when we have done our best, how slowly goeth it on?* Oh precious time! what hearts have they, what lives do those men lead, that think time long? that have time to spare, and pass in idleness.

19. To convince you more, consider I beseech you the exceeding greatness of the work you have to do; and tell

tell me then whether it be time for you to delay? Especially you that are yet unconverted, and strangers to the heavenly nature of the Saints, you have far more to do than other men. You have a multitude of head-strong passions to subdue, and abundance of deadly sins to kill; and rooted vices to root up: You have many a false opinion of God, and his waies, to be plucked up; and the customes of many years standing to be broken: You have blind minds that must be enlightened with heavenly knowledge: and abundance of Spiritual Truths, that are above the reach of flesh and blood, that you must needs learn and understand: You have much to know, that is hard to be known, You have a dead Soul to be made alive, and a hard heart to be melted; and a feared Conscience to be softned, and made tender; and the guilt of many thousand sins to be pardoned: You have a new heart to get, and a new end to aim at, and seek after, and a new life to live; abundance of Enemies you have to fight with and overcome: abundance of temptations to resist and conquer. Many Graces to get, and preserve, and exercise, and increase: and abundance of holy works to do for the Service of God; and the good of your selves, and others. O what a deal of work doth every one of these words contain! and yet what abundance more might I name! And have you all this to do, and yet will you delay? And they are not indifferent matters that are before you: It is no less than the saving of your Souls; and the obtaining the blessed Glory of the Saints. Necessity is upon you: These are things that Must be done, or else wo to you that ever you were born: And yet have you another day to lose! Why Sirs, if you had a hundred miles to go, in a day or two, upon pain of death; would you delay? O think of the work that you have to do, and then judge whether it be not time to stir?

20. And methinks it should exceedingly terrifie you to consider, what abundance by such Delays do perish : and how few that wilfully delay are ever converted, and saved . Many a Soul that once had purposes hereafter to repent, is now in the misery where there is no Repentance, that will do them any good. For my part, though I have known some very few Converted when they are old ; yet I must needs say, both that they were very few indeed, and that I had reason to believe, that they were such that had sinned before in ignorance, and did not wilfully put off Repentance, when they were convinced that they must turn. Though I doubt not but God may convert even these if he please, yet I cannot say that I have ever known many, if any such to be converted. Sure I am that Gods usual time is in Child-hood, or youth, before they have long abused grace, and wilfully delaid to turn when they were convinced. Some considerable time I confess many have before their first convictions, and purposes be brought to any great ripeness of performance : but \emptyset how dangerous is it to delay ! *oh*

21. Consider also ; *Either Conversion is Good, or Bad for you: Either it is needful, or unnecessary.* If it be bad, and a needless thing, then let it alone ~~for~~ altogether. But if you are convinced that it is Good, and necessary, is it not better now than to stay any longer ? Is it not the sooner the better ? Are you afraid of being safe, or happy too soon ? If you are sick, you care not how soon you are well : If you have a bone out, you care not how soon it is set : If you fall into the water, you care not how soon you get out : If your house be on fire, you care not how soon it be quenched : If you are but in fears by any doubts, or ill tidings, you care not how soon your fears be over. And yet are you afraid of being too soon out of the power of the Devil and the danger of Hell ; and of being too soon the Sons of God, and the holy, justified heirs of Heaven ?

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22. Consider also ; Either you can turn now, or not. If you can, and yet will not, you are utterly without excuse. If you cannot to day, how much less will you be able hereafter ; when strength is less, and difficulties greater, and burdens more ? Is it not time therefore to ~~make out~~ to Christ for strength ; and should not the very sense of your ~~un~~ability dissuade you from delay ? about

23. Consider ~~how long you have staid already~~, and ~~part~~ Gods Patience ~~to it~~ by your folly ; Hath not the Devil, the world, and the flesh, had many years time of your life already ? Have you not long enough been swallowing the poison of sin ? and long enough been abusing the Lord that made you, and the blood of the Son of God, that was shed for you, and the Spirit of Grace, that hath moved and persuaded with you ? Are you not yet gone far enough from God ? and have you not yet done enough to the damning of your selves, and casting away Everlasting Life. O wretched sinners ! it is rather time for you, to fall down on your faces before the Lord, and with tears and groans, to lament it day and night, that ever you have gone so far in sin, and delayed so long to turn to him as you have done. Sure / if after so many years rebellion, you are yet so far from lamenting it, that you had rather have more of it, and had rather hold on a little longer, no wonder if God forsake you, and let you alone. by

24. Have you any hopes of Gods acceptance, and your Salvation, or not ? If you have such hopes, that when you turn, God will pardon all your sins, and give you Everlasting Life : is it think you ~~an~~ *ingenious* thing to desire to offend him yet a little longer, from whom you expect such exceeding Mercy, and Glory as you do ? Have you the faces to speak out what is in your hearts, and practice ; and to go to God with such words as these : " Lord I know I cannot have the pardon of one sin, without

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the Blood of Christ, and the riches of thy Mercy: Nor can I be saved from Hell without it: But yet I hope for all this from thy Grace; I beseech thee let me live a little longer in my sins; a little longer let me trample on the Blood of Christ, and despise thy commands, and abuse thy Mercies; a little longer let me ~~spit in the face of thy~~ ^{despise} Goodness, and prefer the flesh, and the world before thee, and then pardon me all that ever I did, and take me into Glory." Could you for shame put up such a request to God as this? If you could, you are past shame: If not, then do not practise and desire that, which you cannot for shame speak out and request.

25. Moreover, it is an exceeding advantage to you, to come in to God betimes, and an exceeding loss, that you will suffer by delay. If you were sure to be converted at the last. If you speedily come in, you may have time to learn, and get more understanding in the matters of God, than else can be expected: For knowledge ~~will~~ ^{can} not be had but by time, and study. You may also have time to get strength of Grace, when young beginners can expect no more than an infant strength: You may grow to be men of parts and abilities, to be useful in the Church, and profitable to those about you, when others cannot go or stand, unless they lean on the stronger for support. If you come in betime, you may do God a great deal of service; which in the evening of the day, you will neither have strength, nor time to do. You may have time to get Assurance of Salvation, and to be ready with comfort when death shall call: When a weakling is like to be perplexed with doubts, and fears, and death is like to be terrible, because of their unreadiness.

26. And did you ever consider, who and how many do stay for you while you delay? Do you know who it is that you make to wait your leisure? God himself stands over you with the offers of his Mercy, as if he thought it long

long till you return, saying, *O that there were such a heart in them! and when will it once be? How long ye simple will you love simplicity, and scorers delight in scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn ye at my reproof,* Deut. 5. 29. Jer. 13. 17. Prov. 1. 22. And do you think it wise, or safe, or mannerly for you to make the God of Heaven to wait on you, while you are serving his Enemy? Can you offer God a baser indignity, than to expect that he should support your lives, and feed you, and preserve you, and patiently forbear you while you abuse him to his face, and drudge for the flesh, the world, and the Devil? Should a worm thus use the Lord that made him? You will not your selves hold a candle in your hands, while it burns your own fingers; nor will you hold a nettle, or a wasp in your hand to sting you; nor will you keep a dog in your house, that is good for nothing but to snarl at you, and bite your Children, or worry your sheep: And yet God hath long held up your lives, while in stead of Light, you have yielded nothing but a stinking snuff; and in stead of grapes you have brought forth nothing but thorns and thistles; and while you have snarled at his Children, and his Flock, and done the worst you could against him. And would you indeed put God to wait on you thus, while you serve the Devil yet one day more? Must God as it were hold the drunkard the candle while he reels and spues? Must he draw the curtain, while the filthy wretch doth once more please his fleshly lusts? Marvail not, if he withdraw his supporting Mercy, and let such wretches drop into Hell.

And it is not God only, but his *Servants, and Creatures, and Ordinances*, that all are waiting on you. The Angels stay for the joy that is due to them upon your Conversion. Ministers are studying, and preaching, and praying for you. Godly neighbours are praying, and longing for your change. The Springs, and rivers

rivers are flowing for you : The winds blow for you : The Sun shines for you : The clouds rain for you : The Earth bears fruit for you : The beasts meet labour, and suffer, and die for you : All things are doing, and would you stand still, or else do worse ? What haste makes the Sun about the world, to return in its time to give you light ? What haste make other Creatures in your service ? And yet must you delay ? Must God stay, and Christ, and the Spirit stay ? Must Angels stay, must Ministers stay, must the Godly stay, and the Ordinances stay, and all the Creatures stay your leisure, while you are abusing God, and your Souls, and others, and while you delay, as if it were too soon to turn ?

27. Consider, that when you were lost, the Son of God did not delay the work of your Redemption. He presently undertook it, and turned by the stroak of damning Justice. In the fulness of time he came and performed what he undertook : he failed not one day of his appointed time. And will you now Delay to accept the benefit, and turn to him ? Must he make such haste to save you at so dear a rate, and now will you delay to be saved ?

28. Moreover, God doth not delay to do you good : You have the day and night in their proper seasons : The Sun doth not fail to rise upon you at the appointed time : You have the Spring, and Harvest in their meetest seasons : the former and latter rain in season. When you are in want you have seasonable supplies : and when you are in danger, you have seasonable deliverance : And is it meet or equal that you should refuse to bring forth seasonable fruit, but still be putting off God with your delays ?

29. Moreover, When you are in trouble and necessity, you are then in haste for deliverance, and relief. Then

you think every day a week till your danger of suffering be past. If you be under the pain of a disease, or in danger of death, or under poverty, or oppression, or disgrace, you would have God relieve you without delay: And yet you will not turn to him without delay. Then you are ready to cry out, *"How long, Lord, how long" till deliverance come!* but you will not hear God, when he cryeth to you in your sins, *"How long will it be ere you turn from your transgressions; when shall it once be?"* When you are to receive any outward deliverance, you care not how soon; the sooner the better: but when you are to turn to God and receive his Grace, and title to Glory, then you care not how late, as if you had no mind of it. Can you for shame beg of God to hasten your deliverances, when you remember your delays, and still continue to trifle with him, and draw back?

30. Your present prosperity and worldly delights are passing away without Delay; and should you delay to make sure of better in their stead? Time is going; and health is going; youth is going: yea life is going: your riches are taking wing; your fleshly pleasures do perish in the very using; Your meat and drink is sweet to you little longer than it is in your throat. Shortly you must part with house, and lands, with goods, and friends, and all your mirth, and earthly business will be done. All this you know, and yet will you delay to lay up a durable treasure which you may trust upon, and to provide you a better tenement before you be turned out of this? What will you do for an habitation, for pleasures and contents, when all that you have now is spent and gone, and Earth will afford you nothing but a grave? If you could but *keep that you have*, I should not much wonder, that knowing so little of God, and another world, you look not much after it; But when you perceive death knocking at your doors, and see that

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all your worldly comforts are packing up, and hastening away, methinks, if you have your wits and sense about you should presently turn, and make sure of Heaven, without any more delay.

31. Consider also whether it be equal, that you should delay your Conversion; when you can seasonably dispatch your worldly busincß, and, when your flesh would be provided for, you can hearken to it without Delay. You have wit enough to sow your seed in season, and will not delay it till the time of harvest: You will reap your corn when it is ripe, and gather your fruit when it is ripe, without delay. You observe the seasons in the course of your labours, day by day, and year by year: You will not lie in bed when you should be at your work; nor delay all night to go to your rest; nor suffer your servants to delay your business: You will know your dinner time, and supper time day by day: If you be sick you will seek help without delay, lest your disease should grow to be uncurable. And yet will you delay your Conversion and the making sure of Heaven? Why Sirs, shall these trifles be done without delay, and shall your Salvation be put off? In the Name of God Sirs what do you think of? Do you imagine that you can better suffer Hell-fire, than hunger, or nakednes? Or that you can better bear the loss of Everlasting Joys, than the loss of your commodities, and provisions in the world? Sure/ if you believe the life to come, you cannot think so. And can you have while for every thing, except that one thing, which all the rest are merely to promote? and in comparison of which they are all but dreams? Can you have while to work, to plow, and sow, and reap, and cannot you have while to prepare for Eternall Life? Why Sirs, if you cannot find time yet to search your hearts, and turn to God, and prepare for death; give over eating, and drinking, and sleeping, and say, you

you cannot have time for these. You may as wisely say so for these smaller matters, as the greater.

32. Moreover, if men offer you courtesies, and commodities for your bodies, you will not stand Delaying, and need so many persuasions to accept them. If your Landlord would for nothing renew your lease; if any man would give you houses, or lands, would you delay so long before you would accept them? A beggar at your door will not only thankfully take your alms, without your intreaty, and importunity, but will beg for it, and be importunate with you to give it. And yet will you delay to accept the blessed offers of Grace, which is a greater thing?

33. Yet Consider, that it is God that is the Giver, and you that are the miserable beggars, and receivers: And therefore it is fitter that you should wait on God, and call on him for his Grace, when he seemeth to delay, and not that he should wait on you. He can live without your receiving, but you cannot live without his giving. The beggar must be glad of an alms at any time; and the condemned person of a pardon at any time; but the giver may well expect that his gift be received without delay, or else he may let them go without it.

34. And methinks you should not deal worse with God, when he comes to you as a Physician to save your own Souls, than you would do with a neighbour, or a friend, when it is not for your own good, but for theirs. If your neighbour lay a dying, you would go and visit him without delay: If he fell down in a swoon, you would catch him up without delay; If he fell into the fire, or water, you would pluck him out without delay; Yea you would do thus much by a very beast. And yet will you delay when it is not another, but your selves, that are sinking, and drowning, and within a step of death and desperation? If a woman be but in travail,

travail, her neighbours will come to her without delay; And yet when their own Souls are in bondage to sin and Satan, and a state of death, they will let them lie there, year after year, and when we desire them to be Converted, here's nothing but delays.

35. If yet you perceive not how unreasonably you deal with God, and your Souls, I beseech you consider *whether you do not deal worse with him, than you do with the Devil himself.* If Satan or his servants perswade you to sin, you delay not so long but you are presently at it; You are ready to follow every tipling companion, or gamester that puts up the finger. You are as ready to go, as they to invite you: The very sight of the cup doth presently prevail with the drunkard: and the sight of his filthy mate prevaileth with the fornicator; and sin can be presently entertained without delay. But when God comes, when Christ calls, when the Spirit moveth, when the Minister perswadeth, when Conscience is convinced, we can have nothing after all, but wishes and purposes, and promises, with Delays. Of what a stomach hath that man, or what a brain, that will snatch at poyson, and swallow dung and dirt with greediness, without any chewing; and when you offer him meat, stands sighing, and looking on it, and hardly will be perswaded to put it in his mouth: and if he do, he is chewing it so long, that at last he even spits it out again, and cannot get it down. Thus deal ungodly wretches, between their poisonous sins, and the saving means, and Grace of Christ.

Nay more than this, so eager are they on their sin, that we are not able to intreat them to delay it. When the passionate man is but provoked, we cannot perswade him to delay his rayling language, so long as to consider first of the issue. We cannot intreat the drunkard

to put off his drunkenness but for one twelve month: while he tryeth another course: All the ministers in the Country cannot perswade the worldling to forbear his worldliness, and the proud persons their pride, and the ungodly person his ungodliness, for the space of one month or week, or day. And yet when God hath a command, and a request to them, to Turn to him, and be saved, here they can delay without our intertay.

36. Consider also that *it is not possible for you to turn too soon; nor will you ever have cause to repent of your speediness.* Delay may undo you; but speedy turning can do you no harm; I wonder what hurt you think it can do you, to be quickly reconciled to God! And why then should there be any Delay, where it is not possible to be too hasty? Do you think that there is ever a Saint in Heaven, yea or on Earth either, that is sorry that he staid not longer unconverted? No; you shall never hear of such a repentance from the mouth of any that is indeed converted.

37. But I must tell you on the contrary side, that if *ever you be so happy as to be Converted, you will Repent it, and a hundred times Repent it, that you delayed so long before you yielded.* O how it will grieve you when your hearts are melted with the Love of God, and are overcome with the infinite kindness of his pardoning, saving Grace; that ever you had the hearts to abuse such a God, and deal so unkindly with him, and stand out so long against that compassion ~~that was~~ seeking your Salvation? O how it will grieve your hearts to consider, that you have spent so much of your lives in sin, for the Devil, and the flesh, and the deceitful world. O you will think with your selves; was not God more worthy of my youthful daies? Had I not been better have spent it in his Service, and the work of my Salvation? Alas, that I should

should waste such precious daies, and now be so far behind hand as I am! Now I want that Faith, that Hope, that Love, that Peace, that Assurance, that Joy in the Holy Ghost, which I might have had if I had spent those years for God, which I spent in the service of the world and the flesh. Then I might have had the comfort of a well spent life, and with joy have now lookt back upon those daies, and seen the good I had done to others, and the honour I had brought to God: whereas I must now look back upon all those years with sorrow, and shame, and anguish of mind. You will think to yourselves then a hundred times, Of that I had but that time again to spend for God, which I spent for sin! and to use for my Soul, which I wasted for my brutish flesh. Believe it, Sirs, if ever you be converted, you must look for these Repenting sorrows for all your Delaies (and that is best that can come of it) And who would now wilfully make work for sorrow?

38. And I pray you consider, whether it belongs of right to God or you, to determine of the day and hour of your coming in? It is he that must give you the pardon of your sins: and doth it not then belong to him to appoint the time of your receiving it? You cannot have Christ, and life without him: It is he that must give you the Kingdom of Heaven: And is he not worthy then to appoint the time of your Conversion, that you may be made partakers of it? But if he say "To day", dare you say, "I'll stay till to morrow?"

39. Nay consider, whether God or you be likelier to know the meetest time? Dare you say that you know better when to turn, than God doth? I suppose you dare not: And if you dare not say so; for shame let not your practice say so, God saith, "To day, while it is called to day, hear my voice, and harden not your hearts." And dare you say, "It's better stay one month longer, or

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order*
one day longer? God saith. Behold this is the accepted time! behold, this is the day of Salvation, 2 Cor. 6, 2. And will you say, Is time enough to morrow? Do you know better than God? If your Physitian do but tell you in a plurisie, or a feaver, you must let blood this day before to morrow, you will have so much reason as to submit to his understanding, and think that he knows better than you: And cannot you allow as much to the God of Wisdom?

40. Consider also, that the speediness of your Conversion when God first calls you, doth make you the more welcome, and is a thing exceeding/pleasing to God. Our Proverb is, *A speedy gift is a double gift* • If you ask any thing of a friend, and he give it you presently, and cheerfully at the first asking, you will think you have it with a good will: but if he stand long delaying first, and demurring upon it, you will think you have it with an ill will, and that you owe him the smaller thanks. If a very beggar at your door must stay long for an alms, he will think he is the less beholden to you. How much more may God be displeased, when he must stay so long for his own, and that for your benefit? God loveth a cheerful giver, and consequently a cheerful Obeyer of his call: And if it be hearty and cheerful, it is the like^y to be speedy, without such delays.

41. And I would desire you but to do with God as you would be done by. Would you take it well of your Children if they should tear all their cloaths, and cast their meat to the dogs, and tread it in the dirt, and when you intreat them to give over, they will not regard you? Would you stand month after month, intreating and waiting on them, ~~as God doth on you~~, ~~in a foolisher course~~ Or rather would you not either soundly whip them, or take their meat from them till hunger teach them to use it better? If you servant will spend

spend the whole day and year in drinking and playing, when he should do your work, will you wait on him all the year with intreaties; and pay him at last, as if he had served you? And can you expect that God should deal so by you?

42. And consider I pray you, that *your Delay is a Denial*, and so may God interpret it. For the *Time of your Turning* is part of the *command*. He that saith *Turn*, saith *Now*, even *To day*, without delay. He giveth you no longer day: If time be lengthened, and the offer made again and again, that's more than he promised you, or you could have promised *your selves*. His Command is, *Now Return and Live*. And if you refuse the *Time*, the *Present time*, you refuse the offer, and forfeit the benefit. And if you knew but what it is to give God a denial in such a case as this, and what a case you were in if he should turn away in wrath, and never come near you more, you would then be afraid of jesting with his hot displeasure, or ~~delaying~~ with the Lord.

43. And methinks you should remember, that *God doth not stay thus on all as he doth on you*. Thousands are under burning and despair, and past all remedy, while patience is waiting yet upon you. Can you forget that others are in Hell at this very hour, for as small sins as those that you are yet intangled, and linger in? *Good Lord*, what a thing is a sensless heart! That at the same time when millions are in misery, for delaying or refusing to be Converted, their successors should fearlessly venture in their steps. Surely if Faith had but opened your ears to hear the cries of those damned Souls, you durst not imitate them by your Delays.

44. And I must tell you, that *God will not always thus wait on you*, and attend you by his patience, as hitherto he hath done. Patience hath his appointed time.

And

And if you outstay that time, you are miserable wretches. I can assure you, Sirs, the glas is turned upon you; and when it is run out, you shall never have an hour of patience more: Then God will no more intreat you to be converted. He will not alwaies stand over you with Salvation, and say, O that this sinner would Repent and Live! O that he would take the Mercies that I have provided for him! Do not expect that God shoul^d thus alwaies with you: for it will not be.

45. Your Delaies do weary the Servants of Christ that are employed for your recovery. Ministers will grow weary of preaching to you, and perswading you: When we come to men that were never warned before, we come in hopes that they will hear and obey: and this hope puts life and earnestness into our perswasions: But when we have perswaded men but a few times in vain, and leave them as we found them, our spirits begin to droop and flag: Much more when we have preached and perswaded you many years, and still you are the same, and are but where you were: This dulls a Ministers spirit, and makes him preach heavily and coldly, when he is almost out of heart and hope. I do not justifie Ministers in this, and say, they *should* do thus: I know they *should not*; and if they were perfect they *would not*: but they are but men, and imperfect themselves: and what man is able to be as lively and fervent in his work, when people stir not, and he sees no good done on the miserable hearers, as if he had the encouragement of success? O when we do but see the hearts of hardened, stubborn sinners relent, and break, and melt before the power of the Word, and when we hear them cry out for Christ and Mercy, and cry out against themselves for their former folly, and confess their sins, and ask us what they shall do to be saved? and are but willing to be ruled by Christ

Christ the Physician of their Souls : this would put life into a Preacher that was cold and dull ; this would even make a stone to speak. But when we tell men of Gods threatenings till they are past believing them, and tell them of Gods Anger till they seem to be past fearing it , and tell them of the plague of sin , till they are past feeling ; when in stead of preaching men to Faith , and Repentance, and fear, and tenderness of heart, we preach them into greater unbelief and carelessness , and dead stupidity, this is enough to dull or break the heart of almost any Preacher in the world . What man is able to follow so fruitless a work with liveliness ? And then its you that will have the loss , and danger of it : When you have dried the breasts, the child may famish : If your Preachers could not awake , and change you with all their convincing arguments , and fervency , how quietly may you sleep on when you have flattened them by discouragements ? If Satan can either dismount , or make useles these Cannons, that were wont to batter his garrison, he may then possess your Souls in peace. You talk against persecutors that silenced Ministers : But O Sirs , it is you that are our greatest persecutors , that refuse and delay to yield to the calls of Christ by our Ministry , and make us labour so much in vain : Though it be not in vain as to our own Souls , yet you make it in vain as to yours : When we have studied till we almost break our brains , and preached till we have quite broke our strength , and we are consumed , and worn away with labour and bodily pains that it procureth, then you come after , and make us requital by breaking our hearts by your delaies , and refusing to turn and live. Truly Sirs , I must tell you for my own part , that if it had not been for those that gave me better encouragement by their obedience, I should never have held out with you a quarter of this time : If all had profited as little as some,

and

and all had stuck as fast in an unconverted state as some ; if the humble , penitent , obedient ones among you, had not been my comfort and encouragement under Christ , I had been gone from you many a year ago , I could never have held out till now : either my corruption would have made me run away with *Jona* ; or my judgement would have commanded me to shake the dust off my feet, as a witness against you , and depart : But to what end do I speak all this to you ? To what end ? Why , to let you see how you abuse both God and man , by your Delays and disobedience . You cannot possibly do us that are your Teachers , a greater injurie or mischief in the world . It is not in your power to wrong us more . Are our studies , and our labours worth nothing , think you ? Are our watchings and waiting worth nothing ? Are our Prayers , and tears , and groans to be despised ? God will not despise them if you do : Believe it , he will set them all on your score , and you will one day have a heavy reckoning of them , and pay full dear for them . Is it equal dealing with us , that when we are watching for your Souls , as men that know we must give an account , you should rob us of our comfort , and make us do it with sighs and sorrow ? *Heb. 13. 17.* Yea that you should undo all that we are doing , and make us lose our labour and our hopes ; And yet do you not think to pay for this ? I tell you again , unconverted sinners , we are wearied with your delays : Many years we have been persuading you but to Turn and Live , and yet you are unturned ; You have been convinced long , and thinking on it , and wishing long , and talking of it , and promising long , and yet it is undone , and here is nothing but delays . We see while you delay , death takes away one this week , and another the next week , and you are passing into another world apace ; and yet those that are left behind will take no warning , but still delay : We see that

that Satan delays not while you delay : He is day and night at work against you : if he seem to make a truce with you, it is that he may be doing secretly while you suspect him not : We see that sin delayeth not while you delay : It is working like poysen, or infection in your bodies, and seizing upon your vital powers ; its every day blinding you more and more ; its hardening your hearts more, and fearing up your Consciences, to bring you past all feeling and hope : And must we stand by, and see this miserable work with our peoples Souls, and all be frustate, and rejected by themselves, that we do for their deliverance ? How long must we stand by with the light in our hands, while you are serving the flesh, neglecting that which we are sent to call you to ? It is not our busines to hold you the candle to play by, or to sleep by, or to sin by : these are works that better agree with the dark : But God sent us to you on another message ; even to Light you out of your sins to him, that you might be saved. Truly beloved hearers, I must needs say, that the time seems long, and very long to me, that I have been preaching so many years to you for Conversion, and for an Holy, Heavenly life, even since I first knew you, and that yet so many of you are drown'd in sin, and ignorance, and are unconverted ; when I think your very Consciences tell you that it is a thing that must be done : I tell you all these years do seem to me a long time to wait on you in vain : Blessed be the Lord that it hath not been in vain with some ; or else I would scarce preach any more than one other Sermon to you, even to bid you farewell. I pray you deal but fairly with us, and tell us whether ever you will turn or not ; If you will not, but are resolved for sin and Hell, say so that we may know the worst : speak out your minds, that we may know what to trust to ; For if we once knew you would not turn, we would soon have done with you,

and

and leave you to the Justice of God. But if still you say, *you will turn*; *when will you do it?* You *will* do it, and you *hope* you shall: but when? How long would you have us wait yet? Have you not abused us enough? Nay I must tell you, that you even weary God himself. It is his own expression, *Mal. 2. 17. Isa. 43. 24.* *"Thou hast wearied me with thine iniquities,* *Isa. 1. 14.* And I must say to you as the Prophet, *Isa. 7. 13.* *"Is it a small thing for you to weary men, but you will weary my God also?"* Consider what it is that you do.

46. Consider also that *you are at a constant unspeakable loss every day and hour that you Delay your Conversion.* O little do you know what you deprive yourselves of every day. If a slave in the Gallies, or prison, might live at Court as a Favourite of the Prince, in honour, and delight, and ease, would he delay either years, or hours? Or would he not rather think with himself, *"Is it not better to be at ease, and in honour, than to be here?"* As the Prodigal said, *"How many hired servants of my Father have bread enough, and to spare, and I perish with hunger!"* All this while I might be in plenty, and delight. All the while that you live in sin, you might be in the favour of God; in the high and Heavenly employments of the Saints; you might have the comforts of daily Communion with Christ, and with the Saints; you might be laying up for another world, and might look death in the face with Faith and confidence, as one that cannot be conquered by it; you might live as the Heirs of Heaven on Earth: All this and more than this, you lose by your delays; All the Mercies of God are lost upon you; Your food and rayment, your health and wealth, which you ~~let~~ so much ~~by~~, all is but lost and worse than lust, for they turn to your greater hurt; All our pains with you; and all the Ordinances of God which you possess; and all your time, is lost and worse. And do

do you think it indeed a wise mans part to live any longer at such a loss as this, and that wilfully and for nothing? If you knew your loss, you would not think so.

47. Nay more, *you are all this while doing that which must be undone again, or you will be undone for ever.* You are running from God; but you must come back again, or perish when all is done. You are learning ~~an~~ hundred carnal lessons, and false conceits, that must be all unlearnt again; You are shutting up your eyes in wilful ignorance, which must be opened again; You must learn the Doctrine of Christ, the great Teacher of the Church, if you stay ~~ever~~ so long, or else you shall be cut off from his people, *Acts 3. 22. & 7. 37.* When you have been long accustoming your selves to sin, you must unlearn, and break all those customs again; You are hardning your hearts daily, and they must again be softned. And I must tell you, that though a little time, and labour may serve to do mischief, yet it is not quickly undone again. You may sooner set your house on fire, than quench it when you have done. You may sooner cut and wound your bodies, than heal them agaⁿ; And sooner catch a cold, or a disease, than cure it; You may quickly do that which must be longer a undoing. Besides, the cure is accompanied with pain; You must take many a bitter draught, in groans or tears of godly sorrow, for these delaies; The wounds that you are now giving your Souls, must smart, and smart again, before they are searcht and healed to the bottom. And what man of wisdom would make himself such work and sorrow? Who would travel on an hour longer, that knows he is out of his way, and must come back again? Would you not think him a mad man that would say, I will go on a little further, and then I will turn back?

[†]I know Mr. Bilney the Martyr was offended with this

this comparison, because he thought it was against Free Grace. But comparisons extend not to every respect: There are Two things in your sins to be undone: the one is, the Guilt, and the other is the Habit and power of sin: the first indeed is done away, when you are Converted: but at the cost of Christ, which should not be made light of: And yet some scars may be left behind, and such twigs of Gods rod may fall upon you as shall make you wish you had come sooner in. And for the habit of sin, though Conversion break the heart of it, yet will it live and trouble you while you live: and those sins that now you are strengthening by your delays, will be thorns in your sides, and rebels in your Country, and find you work as long as you live. And thus I may well say that you are doing, that while you delay, that must be long in undoing, and will not be undone so easily as it is done; and you are going on that way, that must be all trod backward.

48. And methinks if it were but this, it should terrifie you from your Delays; that it is likely to make your Conversion more grievous, if you should have so great Mercy from God, as after all to be Converted. There is very few /s/cape that are so exceeding/ long in travail: but if you come to the birth, it is like to be with double pain. For God must send either some grievous affliction to fire and frighten you out of your sins, or else some terrible gripes of Conscience that shall make you groan, and groan again, in the feeling of your folly. The pangs and throys of Conscience, in the work of Conversion, are far more grievous in some than in others. Some are even on the wrack, and almost brought besides their wits, and the next step to desperation, with horror of Soul, and the sense of the Wrath of God; so that they lie in doubts and complaints many a year together; and think that they are even forsaken of God. And to Delay

your

your Conversion, is the way to draw on either this or worse.

49. Consider also, that *Delays are contrary to the very nature of the work, and the nature of your Souls themselves.* If indeed you ever mean to turn, it is a work of haste and violence; and diligence that you must needs set upon: *You must strive to enter in, for the gate is strait, the way is narrow that leads to life; and few there be that find it.* Many shall seek to enter, and shall not be able; Luke 33. 24, 25. *When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us, he shall answer, I know you not whence you are: depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity,* ver. 27. It is a race that you are to run, and Heaven is the prize: *And you know that they which run in a race, run all: but one receiveth the prize: and therefore you must so run, as that you may win and obtain,* 1 Cor. 9. 24, 25. And what is more contrary to this than Delay? You are Souldiers in fight, and your Salvation lieth on the victory; and will you trifle in such a case, when death or life is even at hand? You are travellers to another world, and will you stay till the day is almost past before you will begin your journey? Christianity is a work of that infinite consequence, and requireth such speedy and vigorous dispatch, that Delay is more unreasonable in this than any thing in all the world.

And besides, your Souls are Spirits, of an excellent active nature, that will not be kept idle: and therefore Delay is unsuitable to their excellency. The best and noblest creatures are most active: The basest are most dull, and unfit for action: The earth will stand still: You may easily keep clods and stones from

moving ; But fire and winds that are purer things, and the Sun, and such nobler sublimer creatures, you are not able to keep idle for an hour. Who can cause the Sun to delay its *Course* ? or who can stay the ascending flames ? And therefore to your more excellent immortal Souls, and that in a work that must needs be done, how exceeding/unsuitable are Delays ?

50. If all this will not serve ~~you~~, let me tell you, that *while you are Delaying, your Judgement doth not delay* ; and that when it comes, these Delays will multiply your misery, and the remembrance of them will be your Ever-lasting torment. What ever you are thinking of, or what ever you are doing, your dreadful doom is drawing on apace ; and misery will overtake you, before you are aware. When you are in the Ale-house little thinking of damnation, even then is your damnation coming in haste : when you are drown'd in the pleasures, or cares of the world, your judgement is still hastening. *You* may delay, but *it* will not delay. It is the saying of the Holy Ghost, 2 Pet. 2. 3. *Whose judgement now of a long time lingreth not, and their damnation slumbreth not.* " You may slumber, and that so carelessly that we cannot awake you, but your damnation slumbreth not, nor hath not done of a long time, while you thought it slumbered : and when it comes, it will awaken you. As a man that is in a Coach on the road, or a boat on the water, what ever he is speaking, or thinking, or doing, he is still going on, and hastening to his journeys end, or going down the stream ; So whatever you think, or speak, or do, whether you believe it, or mock at it, whether you sleep or wake, whether you remember it or forget it, you are hastening to damnation, and you are every day a day nearer to it than before : and it is but a little while till you shall

shall feel it. *Behold the Judge standeth before the door,* Jam. 5. 9. The Holy Ghost hath told you, *The Lord is at hand,* Phil. 4. 5. *The day is at hand; the time is at hand; the end of all things is at hand,* Rom. 13. 12. Rev. 22. 10. 1 Pet. 4. 7. *Behold, saith the Lord, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give to every man according as his work shall be,* Rev. 22. 12. And do you as it were see the Judge approaching, and damnation hastening on, and yet will you delay?

And withhold consider, that when it comes, it will be most sore to such as you; and then what thoughts do you think you shall have of these Delays? You are unable to conceive how it will torment your Consciences, when you see that all your hopes are gone, to think what you have brought your selves to, by your trifling; To feel your selves in remediless misery, and remember how long the Remedy was offered you, and you Delayed to use it, till it was too late. To see that you are for ever shut out of Heaven, and remember that you might have had it well as others; but you lost it by Delay. O then it will come with horrour into your mind, *How oft was I perswaded, and told of this? how oft had I inward motions to return? how oft I was purposed to be holy, and to give up heart and life to God? I was even ready to have yielded; but I still delayed, and now it is too late.* Then you shall pay for all our warnings, and all the Sermons and *monitions* which you lost.

And now having laid you down no less than fifty moving Considerations, if it be possible to save you from these Delays, I conclude with this Request to you whoever you be that read these words; that you would but consider *of* all these Reasons, and then entertain them as they deserve. There is not one

of them that you are able to gainsay ; much less of all them. If after the reading of all these, you can yet believe that you have reason to delay, your understandings are forsaken of God ; But if you are forced to confess that you should not Delay, what will you do then ? Will you obey God, and your own Consciences, or will you not ? Will you Turn this hour without delay ? Take heed of denying it, lest you have never such a motion more : You know not, but God that calls you to it, may be resolved, that it should be *now or never.* I do beseech you, yea as his messenger I charge you in his Name, that you Delay not an hour longer, but presently be resolved, and make an unchangeable Covenant with God ; and as ever you would have favour in that day of your distress, delay not now to accept his favour, in the day of your visitation. *Of* what a blessed family were that, which upon the Reading of this, would presently say, *We have done exceeding foolishly in Delaying so great a matter so long : Let us agree together to give up our selves to God without any more delay.* This shall be the day : we'll stay no longer. The flesh, and the world, and the Devil, have had too much already : It's a wonder of patience that hath borne with us so long : we will abuse the patience of God no longer, but begin to be absolutely his this day. " If this may be the effect of these exhortations, you shall have the everlasting blessing : But if still you Delay, I hope I am free from the guilt of your blood.

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Direct.

Direct. X I I. The last Direction that I shall give you, for preventing your miscarriage in the work of Conversion is this : *Stop not in weak and wavering Purposes, and faint attempts : but see that you be groundedly, unreservedly, and habitually (or firmly) Resolved.*

There are many good thoughts, and meanings in the Soul, before *Resolution* : but you are not truly Converted, till you are *Resolved*, and thus *Resolved* as is here express. Here I shall shew you, 1. What this *Resolution* is. 2. Why it is so necessary : and 3. I shall urge you to resolve : and 4. I shall Direct you in it.

1. *Resolution is the firm or prevalent Determination of the Will upon Deliberation.*

In opening this Definition, I shall first shew you how we are led up to *Resolution* by *Deliberation* : and 2. What is this Determination of the will.

There are several steps, by which the will doth rise up to *Resolution*, which I shall set before you. And first it is presupposed that in the state of corrupted Nature, the Soul is *unresolved* for God, if not (in many that are exceeding wicked) *Resolved against* him. At first the sinner doth either *Resolve* to be as he is, or else he hath no *Resolution* to Return. But God breaks many a wicked *Resolution*, or else woe to the ungodly ; for there were no hope. Many wicked wretches, have not only neglected their Souls, but also *Resolved* that they would never lead a Holy life, nor never joyn themselves to the Communion of Saints, nor never leave their drunken company, or be so precise, and make so great a matter of sin, as the Godly do. When we urge them

with the plainest Words of God, and the most unquestionable Reasons, so that they have not a word of sense to speak against it : when we have told them of the Command of God, and told them of the certain danger of their Souls, they will plainly tell us that they are *Resolved* never to be so precise : When they have nothing else to say, but nonsense, they will put us off with this, that they are *Resolved* to venture their Souls without so much ado. But as Resolute as they are, God will break and change their *Resolution*, and make them as much Resolved of the clean contrary, if ever he will save them. For woe to them that ever they were born if he should take them at their word, and Resolve as they Resolve !

Now in this case there are many degrees that men go through before they come to be *Resolved* for God.

1. The first thing usually that befalleth such a Soul, is some further *Light*, which shews him that which before he understood not.
2. This *Light* causeth him to begin to *Doubt*, whether all be so well with him as he thought it had been ; and whether he were so wise in his former Resolutions as he thought himself,
3. When *Light* hath bred these *Doubtings* in his mind, these *Doubtings* breed some *Fears* within him, and he begins to be a little awakened ; lest evil be nearer him than he was aware of, and lest the threatenings of God, and his Ministers should prove true.
4. These *Fears* do drive him to *Consider* of the matter, and to *Deliberate* what he is best to do : To consider whether these things be so or not, and what course he must take if they should prove true.
5. Though sometimes God may bless the very first Considerations to be the present means of true conversion, yet that is no usual thing ; but ordinarily the first Considerations do help

help the mind to some slight convictions, so that the man begins to see a great deal more than he did before; and so much as puts him now past doubt that he was before mistaken, and out of the way. 6. Finding himself in this case, his fears increase, and his grief comes on for his former folly, and he finds himself in a miserable case, and at a loss for a Remedy. 7. By this much he his quickned to a purpose or resolution, to hearken to those that can instruct him, and enquire of them that he thinks are in the right, and to use such means as he is acquainted with, to find out what he must do to be saved. And accordingly he goes among good company, and begins to hear more diligently, and sensibly, and to mark and regard what he hears and reads, and also to cry to God in Prayer for mercy and relief. But all this is but from the Natural Fear of misery, awakened in him by Common preparing Grace. 8. In the use of these Means of Grace, he begins better to understand, and relish the Doctrine of Redemption by Jesus Christ, and the nature and necessity of true Sanctification by the Holy Ghost: And though sometime these Evangelical Illuminations may be special saving works at the very first, yet its more usual, especially with us that are bred up under the Gospel, to have a more superficial common Illumination, before the saving light come in. And by this common Light, men have at first but a general glimmering, and confused Knowledge of a Saviour, and of Redemption, and of Mercy to be had by him. And sometime they have a distinct Knowledge of *some parts only* of the Christian Faith; and sometime a *distinct* Knowledge, and belief of *every Article*; but only *superficial*, and not savingly effectual. 9. By this general, or superficial

Knowledge of Christ, and Mercy, a kind of Hope ariseth in the heart, that yet there is a possibility of escape : and a kind of comfort answerable to this Hope, 10. These Hopes are accompanied with some *Desires* to understand yet more of the Mysterie of the Gospel ; and to be made partakers of the saving Mercy of which he hath had a confused light. 11. And hereupon there is further kindled in the will, a Purpose, or Resolution to go further on in learning, and enquiring into the Will of God, and using his means : And 12. This purpose is performed, and means are further used. And thus far the Soul is but in preparation, and under the common works of Grace, and possibly may fall off and perish. The first degree may be so stifted, that it shall not reach unto the second ; or the second so stifted that it shall not reach unto the third : But the most common stop is at the third degree ; when men are a little frightned, they will not follow it on to Consideration : And they that follow Consideration diligently, do usually speed well, and get through all the rest.

But when the Soul is brought thus far, if God will save it, he next proceeds to this much more ; 1. He giveth a clearer Light into the Soul, which giveth a more distinct, or at least a more piercing, convincing, deep and savoury apprehension of the essentials of Christianity than he ever had before.

Where note of this special Heavenly light, 1. That being usually the Consequent of a more common knowledge, therefore most ordinarily the sum of Christian Doctrine is in some manner known before. 2. That it doth not reveal only some one point of Faith alone, and then another, and so on ; as if we savingly knew one essential point of Faith, when we have no

saving

saving Knowledge of the rest ; For that is a Contradiction. But finding all these Truths received in the mind before by a common Knowledge, the special light comes in upon them all at once ; and so shews us the Anatomy of Christianity, or the parts of Gods Image in one frame, as to the essentials. 3. For the understanding of which you must further know, that there is such an inseparable connection of these Truths, and such a dependence of one upon another, that it is not possible to know one of them truly, and not know all. For example, Believing in Jesus Christ, is an act so inseparable from the rest, that (if the essentials of Christianity be not essential to it) certainly you cannot do this without them. For to believe in Christ, is essentially to believe in him as God and man, two Natures in one Person, by Office the Mediator, our Redeemer and Saviour, to save us from guilt and sin, from punishment and pollution, and to give us by the Holy Ghost, a Holy nature and life, and to give us the forgiveness of sin, and Everlasting life, and so to restore us to the mutual Love of God here, and fruition of him hereafter : and all this as merited and procured by his Death, Obedience, Resurrection, Ascension, and Intercession for his Church. Whether here be all that is Essential to Christianity, and absolutely necessary to Salvation to be believed, I leave to consideration ; but sure I am that all this is Essential to saving Justifying Faith. And Christ is not taken as Christ, if he be not thus taken : For the ends thus enter the definition of his Relation as the Redeemer, and Saviour, and Lord.

So that the Love of God as our felicity and End, and the belief in Christ as the way, are both together in the same minute of time, which soever of them be first

first in order of nature : (which is a question that I dare not here so unseasonably handle.)

2. Upon this special Illumination of the Soul, and the special Consideration with which it doth concur, the Deliberating Soul is presently Resolved. And in these two Acts which always go together, consisteth the special Sanctifying Work : Even in the *Illumination* and *Estimation* of the Understanding, and in the true *Resolution* of the Will.

2. The Determination of the Will, is its own free act, performed by its natural self-determining power, procured by the special Grace of God (I mean in this special case) It followeth Deliberation. While we are unresolved, we Deliberate what to Resolve upon ; that is, we are considering which is best and most eligible, and which not ; and as we practically judge, we use to Determine, and to choose. And when this choice after Deliberation is peremptory and full, its called Resolution.

So that my meaning is to let you understand, that when the Matter of our Faith is set open to the Soul, it is not a wavering fickle purpose, that is a saving closure with it, but it must be a *firm Resolution*. Much less will it ever bring a man to Heaven, to be *thinking and deliberating* what to do, as long as he is unresolved. And now I shall prove the Necessity of this.

I I. Till you are Resolved, you are not Converted, and that appeareth by these Evidences. 1. If you are not *firmly Resolved*, it is certain that you do not *firmly believe*. For such as your *Belief* is, such will be the effects of it upon the *Will*. An unsound Opinionative belief, will produce but tottering, languishing purposes ; but a firm belief will cause a firm Resolution of the Will. And if your belief be unsound, you must confess you are unconverted.

2. Moreover, if you do not esteem God above all Creatures, and Heaven above Earth, and Christ and Grace above sin, you are certainly unconverted. But if you have such a true *estimation*, you will certainly have a firm Resolution. For you will Resolve for that which you highly esteem.

3. If God have not your firm Resolution, he hath not indeed your Heart and Will : For to give God your Hearts and Wills, is principally by firm Resolvirg for him. And if God have not your Hearts, you are sure unconverted.

4. Moreover, if you are not firmly Resolved, your *Affections* will not be *sincere and steadfast*. For all the *Affections* are such as to their *sincerity*, as the *Will* is, which doth excite or command them. And nothing is more mutable than the *Affections in themselves* considered : They will be hot to day, and cold to morrow, if they be not rooted in the *firm Resolution* of the *Will*, which is the life of them.

5. Lastly, Without a *firm Resolution*, there can be no *faithful obedience and execution* of the Will of God. For if men be not *Resolved*, they will heavily go on, and lazily proceed, and easily come off ; For their

their hands go to work without their hearts. It is the greatest work in all the world, that God calls you to: and none but the *Resolved* are able to go through with it. Of which we shall give you a fuller account anon.

III. In the next place, let me intreat you, in the fear of God, to look after this great and Necessary part of your Conversion. There are many degrees of good motions in the mind; but all that falls short of Resolution is unsound. Many are brought to Doubt whether all be well with them, and to have some fears thereupon, that yet will not be brought so far as to consider soberly of the matter, and deliberate what is best to be done, and to advise with their Ministers for the furthering of their Salvation. Many that are persuaded so far as to consider, and deliberate, and take advice, yet go no further than some cold wishes, or purposes, which are all overcome by the Love of the world, and the power of their sins. Many that do proceed to some kind of Practice, do only take a taste or an essay of Religion, to try how they can like it; and begin some kind of outward Reformation, without any firm Resolution to go through with it: Or if their purposes seem strong, it is but occasioned by something without, and not from a settled habit within. All these are short of a state of special Saving Grace, and must be numbered with the Unconverted.

It is a common, and very dangerous mistake, that many are undone by, to think that every good Desire is a certain sign of Saving Grace: Whereas you may have more than *bare Desires*, even, *purposes*, and *promises*, and *some performances*,

performances, and yet perish for want of *Resolution*, and *Regeneration*. Do you think that *Judas* himself had not some *good Desires*, that followed Christ so long, and preached the *Gospel*? Do you not think that *Herod* had not some *good desires*, that heard *John* gladly, and did many things accordingly? *Agrippa* had some *good Desires*, when he was almost perswaded to be a *Christian*. They that for a time believe, have sure some *good Desires*; and more, *Matth.* 13. 20. And so had the young man, that went away sorrowful from Christ, when he could not be his Disciple, unless he would part with all that he had, *Luke* 18. 23 *Matth.* 19. 22. And doubtless those had more than *good Desires*, that had known the way of *Righteousness*, and had escaped the pollutions of the world, through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour *Jesus Christ*, 2 *Pet.* 2. 20, 21. And so had those, *Heb.* 10. 26, 29. that had received the knowledge of the *Truth*, and were Sanctified by the blood of the *Covenant*. And those *Heb.* 6. 4, 5, 6. that were once enlightened, and tasted of the *Heavenly gift*, and were made partakers of the *Holy Ghost*, and tasted the good *Word of God*, and the powers of the world to come. And sure *Ananias* and *Sapphira* had more than some *good Desires*, when they sold all, and brought half the price to the *Apostles*.

Believe it Sirs, there are none of your *Desires*, or *Endeavours*, that will serve ~~turn~~, to prove you in a state of *Grace*, unless they be accompanied with firm *Resolution*. Be it known to you that you are unconverted, if you are not *habitually Resolved*. And therefore I must here intreat you all, to put the question close to your hearts, Are you *Resolved*, *firmly Resolved*, to give up your selves and all to Christ, and to be wholly his, and follow his conduct? or are you not?

The

The question is not, what good meanings, or wishes, or purposes, you may have, but whether you are *Resolved*, and *firmly Resolved*? Take heed, Sirs, what you venture your Souls upon : God will not be dallied with, nor be deceived. He will have no *unresolved*, false-heart-ed servants.

Before I proceed to urge you further, I shall here tell you what *kind* of *Resolution* it must be, that will prove a man *converted* : and then I shall give you such *Motives* as should perswade you to it.

It is not *all* *kind* of *Resolution* that will serve turn ; but it is only that which hath these following properties, that will evidence a state of Grace.

1. As to the *Matter*, it must be the whole Es-
sence of Christianity, that must be Resolved on. It must
be no less than a closing with God as your chiefest hap-
piness, to be Loved above all, and as your chiefest
Lord to be obeyed before all : and a closing with Je-
sus Christ as your only Saviour, your Teacher, and
your Lord ; to bring your hearts again to God, and
reconcile you to him : and a closing with the Holy
Ghost as your Sanctifier, to make you a holy people,
and cleanse you from all your sin of heart and life,
and guide you by the Ministry, Word, and Ordin-
ances, to Everlasting life. Thus must you Resolve
to deliver up your selves to God the Father, Son, and
Holy Ghost, to be made a peculiar people, zealous of
good works. Should you be never so Resolute in some
point of Religion, and as *Ananias* to give God Half,
and to become half Religious, and half Holy, and
half Heavenly, this is but to be half Christians, and will
not bring you half way to Heaven : Its entire Chris-
tianity that must be Resolved on.

2. You

2. You must also be *Resolved* for *present* obedience, and to turn without any more delay ; and not only Resolve to turn to *morrow*, or sometime hereafter. No Resolution is sincere in this case, if it be but for the future : If you had rather stay but one day or hour longer in the state of sin, and service of the flesh, you are no true Disciples of Christ, though you should be Resolved to turn to *morrow*.

3. And your Resolution must be *Absolute* and *peremptory*, nor only *without* any secret *Reserves*, but *Positively* against any such *Reserves*. Here it is that *Hypocrites* commonly fall short ; They see they must mend, and they are convinced that a holy life is necessary, and they Resolve hereupon to change their course, and turn religious ; but either it is with this secret Reserve, *Provided always that I look to my credit, or estate, or life, what ever I do, and provided that I go no further in Religion than will stand with these ; provided that godliness be not my undoing in the world.* Or else if he have not actually such thoughts, he hath them always virtually, and habitually : He is not Resolved *against* such *Reserves* ; He hath not considered that Christ will have no Disciples that cannot and will not part with all ; and that if he hope for Heaven, he must not look for a treasure on earth, but only pass through the world as a traveller, or labour in it as the harvest of the Lord, in expectation of a Reward and Rest hereafter ; and so Resolved to take Christ on these self-denying terms. But he that will be saved, must be *thus* resolved, Even to sell *all*, to buy the unvaluable *pearl*, Math. 13. 46, 47. To make sure of Heaven, though he lose all on Earth by it ; to lay up his hopes in the life to come, and venture, and let go all rather than those hopes : to take

take Christ absolutely upon his own terms, for better and worse, as being certain that there is no other way to life, and that there is no danger of losing by him. The Hypocrite is like a man that when he delivereth up the possession of his house, will make his bargain, that he will keep this room, or that room to himself, for his own use. Or like a servant that will not be hired but on Condition that his Master shall not set him to such or such work that he loves not : But Christ will have no such servants ; You must deliver up all to him, or he will accept of none ; You must give *him* leave to make his Conditions for you, and tell you on what terms you must serve him, and wholly refer the matter to *him*, even for life it self, and not offer to put Conditions upon him, and think to bring *him* to any terms of yours. It is not true Resolution unless it be Absolute, and unreserved, and against all reserves ; Yea, and that also as to perseverance ; that you Resolve to give up your selves *finally* as well as *totally*, not only without any Reserve of a Revocation, but against any such Revocation ; It must not be a coming to Christ upon essay, or meer tryal, that if you do not like you may leave again ; But you must make an unchangeable everlasting Covenant ; It must be part of your Covenant that you will never revoke it.

4. Moreover, your Resolution must be *well grounded* ; You must know what the *Essentials* are of that Religion which you Resolve on, and you must be moved to it by right and weighty Considerations ; and go upon reasons that will hold up your Resolution. For should you Resolve on the most necessary work (as this is) upon mistakes, and wrong or insufficient Reasons, as the will of man, the custom of the country, the

the reputation of Christianity, or only such like; there is no likelihood that your Resolution should endure, and it is not sincere while it doth endure.

5. Your Resolution must be accompanied with a *sense of your own insufficiency*, to stand to it immutably, and execute it faithfully by your own strength; as knowing the corruption, and deceitfulness of your own heart; And it must be strengthned, and supported by a *confidencē, or dependence on the sufficiency of Christ*, on whose Grace, and spirit you must rely, both for the continuing, and the performing of your Resolutions; as knowing that without him you can do nothing, but that you can do all things (necessary) through Christ strengthning you.

6. Lastly, Your Resolution is not Savingly sincere, unless it be *habitually*. It is a very hard question, how far some moving exhortation, or the approach of death in sickness, may prevail with the unsanctified for an *Actual Resolution*; Undoubtedly very far; But that's a mans mind and will which is *Habitually* his mind and will; When the very Inclination, and bent of your will is Right, then only is your heart right. A bowle may by a rub, or bank, be turned contrary to the byas; but when it is over the rub it will follow the byas again in its ordinary course. The flame may be hindred from ascending a little while, but when it is got over the stop, it will be mounting upward. A stone will move upwards against its Nature, while it is followed by the strength of the hand that cast it; but when the strength is spent, it will quickly fall again. It is not an extraordinary act, that you can try your selves by, but such a free course and tenor of your lives, as will prove that you have a *new Nature, or a heart Inclined and Habituated to God*. The main business therefore is to prove that you are

Habitually Resolved. Set all these together now, and you may see what Resolution it is that must prove you to be Converted. 1. It must be a Resolution for all the Essence of Christianity, and not only some part. 2. It must be a Resolution for *present Obedience*, and not only for some distant time to come. 3. It must be an *Absolute*, peremptory Resolution, without and against *Reserves* for the flesh, both *Total*, and final; without and against any Revocation. 4. It must be *soundly grounded*; and *moved by right principles*; 5. It must be joyned with an *humble sense of your insufficiency*, and a dependence on Christ, for continuing, and performing it. And 6. It must be *Habitual*, and such as sets right the bent and drift of heart and life. All this is of Necessity.

Well Sirs; you see now what you *must* do: the next question then is, what you *will* do? A great many of motions God hath made to you, to let go your worldliness, and wickedness, and become New Creatures, and live to God, and never could you be got to Resolve, and obey them. Many thoughts you have had of it, I suppose; and long you have been purposing that, Turn you would; but all have come to little or nothing because you were never fully Resolved. I am once more sent to you on this message from God, to see whether yet you will Resolve: Whether after all your trifling delays, and after all your wilful sinning, and abuse of Gods Patience, against your own knowledge and Consciences, you will yet Resolve. What say you? Shall God be your Master indeed, and shall Christ be your Saviour and Lord? Shall Heaven be your happiness, and have your hearts indeed? Shall Holiness be your business indeed, and shall

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sin be your hatred, and the flesh and the world be your enemies indeed, and used accordingly from this day forward, without any more ado? I beseech you Sirs Resolve, and fully Resolve.

And because I know if we prevail not with you in this, you are undone for ever, and therefore I am loth to let you go before we have brought you, if it may be, to Resolve; I will give you here some Considerations to turn the scales, and if you will but read them, and soberly consider of them, I shall have great hope to prevail with you, yet after all. One would think that the fifty Considerations under the last Direction might suffice; But lest all should be too little, I will add these following.

1. Consider I beseech you, *what leisure you have had to think of the matter.* You have lived many years in the world already; and you have had nothing to do in it, but to seek after true Happiness; Even your worldly labours ought to have been all but in order to this. And yet are you *unresolved*? Alas Sirs, have you lived some twenty, some thirty years and more in the world, and yet are you not Resolved, what you came hither for, or what you have to do here? Is it twenty, or thirty, or fourty years since you set out, and should by this time have been far on your journey, and are you yet *unresolved whether to go, or which way to go?* as if you were newly entering the world, or as if you had never heard of your busyness. I think so many years are a fair time of Consideration, and its time to be Resolved, if you will Resolve at all.

2. And I pray you consider, *what Helps you have had to have Resolved you before this.* If you did not know what you had to look after, and which way to take, you should have enquired; You had the Word of

God to advise with, and you had your Teachers to advise with, and many experienced Christians to advise with. You wanted not for the wisest, fairest, Counsellors; if you had been but willing and diligent, certainly you might have been Resolved long ago.

3. And consider I beseech you, what a case it is that you are unresolved in. Is it so hard a question that all this time, and all these helps cannot Resolve you? What whether God or the flesh should be first obeyed, and loved? Whether Heaven or Earth, Eternal Glory or the transitory pleasures of sin should be preferred? Whether you should care and labour more to be saved from sin and Hell, or from poverty and worldly crosses, and reproaches? These, and such like are the questions to be Resolved; And are these so hard, that all your wit, and all the advice you can have from Scripture and Ministers, would not serve turn to help you to a Resolution, no not in twenty or thirty years time? O wonderful! that ever the Devil should be able so to befool men! That Reasonable Creatures should be so phreneticke that they cannot be resolved whether it be better be saved, or be damned? or whether sin with Hell after it, be better than Holiness with Heaven after? The Lord have Mercy upon the poor distracted world, and bring some more of them to their wits! We have *Wise men*, if themselves may be judges, very wise in their own conceit, that know many great matters in the world; and yet do not practically know whether God or the Devil be the better master; whether sin or Holiness be the better work, and whether Heaven or Hell be the better wages? If they say *They know these things*, judge by their lives whether they know them *Practically* or not? *Resolve* they will not for God, and Holiness, and Heaven; nor against the flesh, the World, and sin; what-

whatever they may be brought to confess to their self-condemnation. Is it not a pitiful case, that such points as these, should seem so hard to reasonable men, as to be so long in Resolving of them ?

4. And I pray you Consider, *How horribly by this you disgrace your understandings.* You that cannot abide to be derided as sots and fools in the world, do yet abuse your selves thus grossly, as if there were never greater sots scarce upon the Earth. We have proud men that are so high in their own eyes, that they can hardly endure contempt from others, and love almost none that think but meanly or dishonourably of them; and yet what a horrible contempt and dishonour do they cast upon themselves ? If one of these our wise neighbours, should study seven years, to know whether the Sea be fire or water, whether a mountain be heavy ? Whether the fire be hot or cold ? and could not be Resolved after so many years Consideration; what would you think and say of these wise men ? Why Sirs, it is far grosser folly, I tell you again, it is far grosser folly, to be unresolved whether you should be holy or unholy ? which is in plain English, whether it be better go to Heaven or to Hell ? For Faith and Holiness is the way to Heaven; and an unholy life is the way to Hell : And if you will needs forsake the way to Heaven, you may hope to come thither as long as you will; but you may as well hope to touch the Moon with your finger, or to run up and down with a mountain on your backs. And if you will hold on in the way to Hell, that is, in an unsanctified state, you may say you hope for all that to escape Hell, even as wisely as to leap into the Sea, and say I hope to scape drowning, or to throw down your selves headlong from the top of the steeple, and say I hope to scape hurting me, as well as you. Sirs, I beseech you do

not abuse God, and abuse Christ, and the Spirit, and Scripture, and withall abuse your immortal Souls, for I know not what; for ~~thinking~~ sin; for a thing of nought; Your Souls are noble Creatures, and your understandings are noble faculties: Why will you expose them to be the scorn of Satan, and make them so base and foppish as you do? You can see the folly of a poor drunkard, that will make a beast of himself, and go reeling and talking nonsense about the street, for the boys to hoot at him, and make himself the laughing-stock of the town. And I pray you why do you not understand, that till you are Resolved for a Holy, Heavenly life, you are all drunk, while you think your selves to be sober? You are as miserable as the other, and more in this, that yours is in your natures, and theirs is but an accident: yours is continued, and theirs (in that particular) but by fits. In the name of God, Sirs, be-think you, whether you can possibly more disgrace your wits, than to be unresolved of a case as plain as the high way, and which your Everlasting Salvation or damnation lieth on? If one of you could not in twenty years be Resolved, whether the Sun be light or dark, or whether the day or the night be fitter for rest; or whether it be better plow and sow, or let all alone, and hope God will give you a crop without labour: would you take this for a wise man? Again I tell you, your folly is more gross, that cannot all this while be Resolved, whether you should cast away your wilful sins, and give up your selves to Christ, and a Holy life, to obtain the Glory, and escape the misery that is hard at hand. If you stood up to the neck in the water, or stood but in a storm of rain, you would not be so long in deliberating, whether it were better for you to stay there longer or come out. If your finger were but in the fire, you

you need not so long a deliberation, whether you should take it out. And yet these wise men, are under many thousand unpardonable sins, and under the curse of the Law of God, and within a step of everlasting fire, and have no way possible to escape, but by Conversion, Faith and Holiness: and this God hath told them, as plain as the tongue of man can speak, and yet they are *Considering* of it, whether it be best to come out of it: and yet they cannot be resolved. Did I say They are *Considering*? Nay, the Lord be merciful to them, they are so dead-hearted and besotted, that they do not so much as seriously *Consider* of it: but even run on without *Consideration*: Ah poor wretches! They are ready to go to another world, and may look every day when the bell tolles for them, and when death will bring them to their endless life, and yet they have not wit enough, to *Resolve* whether they should make ready: no nor wit enough in their most careless, worldly state, to know that they are *unready*. Death is coming, and Judgment is coming, and the burning Wrath of God is coming, and are even at the door: and yet these wise men are unresolved of that only way that is of absolute necessity to their safety; They must have more time yet to consider of the matter, whether it be best for them to turn or no? They stand at the very brink of Hell; and yet they must further consider of it, whether it be better to turn back or to go on? Nay they will go on without *Consideration*! And yet these men would take it hainously, if one should lay hands on them, and carry them to *Bedlam*; or but tell them of the hundredth part of the sottishness that they are guilty of.

5. And it is further considerable, that these men that are all this while unresolved, about their Conversion and Sanctification, have wit enough to resolve of doubtfuller,

and less necessary matters, without any such advising or delays: And they are men of ordinary parts and capacities for the matters of this world. They can eat when they are hungry, and drink when they are thirsty, without a twelve-months time to advise first on it: They can resolve to go to bed at night, and to rise in the morning, without a years, or a daies deliberation. If they have any thing to buy or sell, they will not deliberate upon it till the market be past; If they have their land to plow, or their corn to sow, or reap, or m w, they will not take a twelve months time to pause upon it. They can quickly Resolve upon their everydayes business, ~~their~~ ~~travells~~, their labours, and all their ordinary affairs. And yet these *same men* cannot Resolve in seven years time, and seven to that, whether Heaven or Earth should be more loved and laboured for? Or whether a corruptible flesh, a wicked fancie, a greedy throat, should be pleased before the God of Heaven, though the pleasing of it cost them the loss of their Salvation.

Why Sirs, a man that is well in his wits, would think that these matters should be more out of doubt than the former, and speedilier resolved on? One would think it should be an easier question, whether you should turn to God and a Holy life, for the saving of your immortal Souls? than whether you should eat, or drink, or sleep, for the preservation of your bodies? For I can in many cases bring some reason that should perswade you to forbear eating, or drinking, or sleeping for a considerable time: but no man breathing can speak a word of reason (except mens folly should be called *Reason*,) that should perswade you to forbear your Conversion for a minute. And if you mistake about these *bodily* matters, the loss may be repaired, at least in the world

world to come: but if you die before you are Resolved, and firmly Resolved to give up your Soul and body to Christ, and live a Holy, Heavenly life, you are undone body and Soul for ever, and all the world can never save you.

Oh what a strange and horrible thing is it, that a man that hath the wit to mannage his affairs as plausibly as any of his neighbours, that can overwit others in the matters of the world: that can govern Towns and Countries: that is learned in his Profession, in Law, in Phy-sick, in Merchandize, in Navigation, or any the like: I say, that a man of so deep a reach, so plodding and active a wit as this, should yet be unresolved, yea at 30. or 40. years old be unresolved, whether to be Sanctified or unsanctified: whether to be Holy and be Saved, or to be unholy, though God hath professed expresly, that such shall not see the face of God, *Heb. 12. 14.* These are our wise men, these are too many (besides the ignorant Country men) of our Gentlemen, our Worshipful, and Honourable men, our great Scholars, and men of noble or reverend esteem: that yet are unresolved, whether to be saved or to be damned. Though God hath written a Bible to resolve them, and a thousand Books are written to Resolve them: and Preachers are studying, and preaching to Resolve them: and a thousand mercies are cast into the scales, that one would think should help to turn them: and some sharp afflictions are helping to Resolve them: and twenty, or fourty years certain experience of the vanity of this world, the deceitfulness of riches, and honour, and pleasure, and the unprofitableness of sin, one would think should Resolve them: yet after all this they are *unresolved*, whether they should presently let go their sin, and whether God, or the flesh should be pleased or displeased? If this be the wisdom of these men,

men, the Lord bless me, and all his chosen, from such wisdom!

6. Now consider further of *your unreasonable wickedness*: *Are not many of your Judgements Resolved, when yet your hearts and wils are unresolved.* I am confident, nay I am certain it is so. You are at once both *Resolved and unresolved*. What a confusion and war do you thus make in your own Souls? The Judgement is for one thing, and the Will and Affections are for another thing. What? are you not led by Reason? Will you let out your Affections, and lead your lives quite contrary to your knowledge? Would not most of you give it me as your Judgement under your hands, that its a thousand times better to cast away your drunkenness, your filthiness, your worldliness, and other known sins, than to keep them any longer? What say you? are you not Convinced that it were your wisest course to part with them this very day and hour? Undoubtedly many of you are. And yet for all this will you not Resolve to do it? Are you not perswaded in your Consciences, that its better to dye in a Holy and Heavenly state, than in a loose and careless worldly state? And that it were your safest, and wisest course to become New men, and lead a Holy Heavenly life without delay? Dare you deny this? Is it not your Judgement? And yet will you not do it? Are you Resolved that it *should* be done, and *must* be done, and yet will you not Resolve to *do* it? Why what is this but to be condemners of your selves? to carry a Judge about with you in your own breasts, that is still passing sentence against you? *Happy is he (saith the Spirit of God, Rom. 14. 22,) that condemneth not himself in that which he alloweth.* If your Judgements be Resolved, let your Wills Resolve, or else you are wilful adversaries of the light, and fight against

against Reason, and unman your selves, and finning wilfully against your Knowledge, shall be beaten with many stripes.

7. Methinks also it should somewhat quicken you to *Resolve*, when you consider *what a case you had now been in, if death had found you unresolved.* For if you are *unresolved*, you are *unsanctified*; and if not *Sanctified*, you are not *pardon*ed, or *Justified*, and therefore undoubtedly you had been past all help, in endless misery, if you had died all this while, before you were firmly *Resolved* for God. O what a dangerous ~~sinfull~~ condition have you stood in all this while? What wise man would live an hour in such a case for all the world, for fear lest that hour should be his last? And yet would you stay longer in it? and still are you *unresolved*?

8. Believe it, *Christ will not own you as his servants, nor trust you what ever promises you may make him, as long as you are unresolved.* Who will take a servant that is not resolved to do any service? Who will take an *unresolved* person if he know it, as a wife, or friend into his intimate love? And indeed you are not truly Christians till you are *Resolved* to take Christ for better and worse. What ever state is short of this, is also short of true *Sanctification*, and will fall short of Heaven. Christ is *Resolved* to stick to his servants, and he well have no servants that be not resolved to stick to him.

9. And indeed if you be *unresolved*, as you are *falshearted at the first setting out, so it is certain that you will never go well on, nor endure to the end in case of tryal, nor can you do the busines of a Christian life without Resolution.* If you will be Christ's Disciples, you must reckon upon persecutions: *You must take up your Croſſ and follow him: You must be hated of all men for his sake and the Gospels:*

Gospels: and you must prepare for prison, and fire, and sword. There's no hope of being saved while you purpose to save your pleasures, riches, liberties, or lives, Matth. 16. 25. Mark 8. 35. Luke 9. 24. And will a man that is unresolved forfaze his friends, estate, and life, for the sake of Christ, and the hopes of Glory? He cannot do it. I know that a carnal ungrounded Resolution, may deceive a man in the day of tryal: when the self-suspecting, fearful Christian may hold out: But yet without an humble self-denying Resolution, joyned with an adherence to Christ for strength, there's no man will hold out. *If thou be a wavering-minded man, thou wilt be unstedfast in all thy ways, Jam. 1. 8.* If thou be not Resolved, the words of a mans mouth will turn thee out of the way: the very mocks and scorns of a drunkard, or a fool that hath no understanding in the matters of Salvation, will make thee shrink, & hide thy profession, and be ashamed of Christ, in whom alone thou hast cause to Glory. If thou be not a Resolved man, what better can be expected, but that thou turn as the weather-cock with every wind, and fit thy Religion to thy worldly ends, and as another *Judas*, sell thy Lord for a little money. If thou fall not away, it will be but for want of a tryal to procure it; and therefore in Gods account thou art gone already; because thy Resolution was never with him.

When you turn to God, there will remain within you the remnants of your corruption, a body of death, a rebelling flesh: and this will be still tempting you, and drawing you from God: And O how strong do these temptations seem to the Soul that is unresolved? Yea without a firm habituate Resolution, it is impossible to overcome them. Your whole way to Heaven is a continual warfare: You have enemies that will dispute every

every foot of the way with you. There's no going a step forward, but as the ship doth in the Sea, by cutting its way through the waves, and billows; and as the plow doth in the earth, by cutting through the resisting soil; There is self which is your principal enemy, and there is Satan, and the world, and almost all that you meet with in it, will prove your hinderers; And you must make your way by valour, and Holy Violence through all; And will an *unresolved* man do this? You will scarce ever bow your knee to God in secret prayer, nor set your selves upon serious Meditations, but the flesh and the Devil will be drawing you off; You will never attempt a faithful reproof, a liberal work of Charity, a hazardous confession of Christ, or any dangerous or costly duty, but the flesh and the Devil will plead against it, and put you to it; And in these and many such cases of your lives, you will never break through nor do any good on it, without Resolution. Do I need to tell you how hard the way of Salvation is, that fly from it on mistake, because you think it harder than it is? Do I need to tell you how false you will prove to Christ, if you have not Resolution, that know it by your ordinary, miserable experience, that a poor temptation will make you sin against your knowledge? How many good wishes and purposes have you had already, in sickness, or at a lively Sermon, that are all come to nothing, for want or a firm Habituate Resolution? What abundance of timeservers, and of chaffie professours are lately fallen off, to the way of rising and riches in the world, or to the pride, and giddy levity of dividers, that oppose the Truth of God and their Treachers, and trouble the Church, and all because they were never well rooted by a found Resolution! They that take Christ but upon liking, do usually mislike

mislike him, when he calls them to self-denial. For they had never that connatural principle that should effectually dispose their Souls to like him: nor had they ever the inward experiences of power and sweetnes, which are proper to the sincere, and should increase their liking of him. Either *Resolve* therefore, or stand by and perish.

10. I beseech you consider also, *what abundance of clear undeniable Reasons doth God give in to thee, to turn the Scales, and cause thee to Resolve.* He fetcheth Reasons from his own Dominion, and Sovereignty? Should not a Creature obey the Lord that made him? He reasoneth with you from his daily preservations. Do you live upon him, and should you not obey him? He reasoneth with you from his Almighineſs: You are all at his Mercy, and wholly in his hands; and yet dare you disobey him? He reasoneth with you from his Love and Goodnes: Never did evil come from him: nor did he ever do any wrong; Never was there man or Angel that was a loser by him; it is not possible to have so good a master, and yet will you not obey him? He fetcheth reasons from all his Mercies: Every bit of bread is from him, and should be an Argument with thee to obey him: Every days health, and strength, and comforts; and every nights rest and ease, thy Mercies at home, and thy Mercies abroad, in private and in publick, all should be so many Arguments with thee to Resolve. You cannot look upon a plant, or a flower under your feet, up on the Sun, or a Star that's over your heads, or upon any creature; but you may see so many Reasons that should move you to Resolve. If all these will not serve, he fetcheth yet stronger Reasons from the Incarnation, example, and blood of the Son of God: Canſt thou look on God incarnate for ſin, combating with Satan, and

and conquering for thee , and dying , and bleeding , and buried for thy sin , and yet be unresolved to leave that sin , and turn to him that hath bought thee by his blood ? If all this will not serve , he Reasoneth with thee from thy own benefit . If thou care not for God , dost thou care for thyself ? Dost thou regard thy own Soul ? If thou do , its high time to Resolve . He reasoneth with thee from Everlasting Glory . Is a certain Kingdom , an Everlasting , glorious Kingdom , nothing to thee ? Art thou content to be thrust out of that Eternal Inheritance ? Is the filthy pleasure of the flesh for a few hours , better than the endless joys of the Saints ? He pleads also with thee from the danger that thou art near . Poor Soul , thou little seest what others see , that are dead before thee . Thou little knowest what they feel that died before they were Resolv'd for God . He fetcheth his Reasons from the certain , everlasting flames of Hell : and is there not force enough in these for to Resolve thee ? Good Lord , what a thing is a senseless sinner ? Dost thou believe Heaven and Hell as thou takest on thee to do ? If thou do believe them , is it possible for thee believably to think of Heaven , and its Eternal Glory , and yet to be unresolved whether to turn or not ? Or canst thou think of the endless miseries of the damned , and yet be unresolved whether to turn or not ? Can any heart be so sensless or deluded ?

Moreover he pleadeth with thee from the equity and sweeteness of his Service . It is but to Love him , and to seek his Kingdom , and forbear those things that hurt thy Soul . His Commands are not unreasonable nor grievous . Darest thou speak out and say that sin is better ; and that Satan hath provided thee a better work than God hath done ; He reasoneth with thee also from his Wisdom and his Justice . He tells thee that as Satan hath

hath nothing to do with thee, and as he is none of thy friends, and meaneth thee not so well as God doth: so he is not able to prescribe thee a more just and perfect Law than God hath done. Follow God and thou art sure thou shalt never be deceived or misled. For he wanteth not Wisdom, or Power, or Goodness to be a meet Law-giver and Guide: But if thou follow the Devil, the world, or the flesh, thou followest a blind and a deceitful guide. And yet after all these Reasons art thou not Resolved?

He Reasoneth with thee also from thy own experience: What good hath sin done thee? And what hurt would Holiness do thee? Yea he reasons with thee from the experience of all the world: *Who was ever the better for sinning? And who was ever the worse for Holiness? How long will thy fleshly delights endure? What will this do for thee in thy extremity? Was ever man made Happy by it? Thou knowest well enough thou must shortly leave it: and that it will forsake thee in thy greatest need: But so would not God, if thou hadst Resolvedly given up thy self to him. All men that refuse a Heavenly life, do sooner or later wish that they had chosen it.*

Abundance of such Reasonings God useth with thee in his Word, and by his Ministers: and dost thou think indeed that there is not weight enough in these to give thee cause immediately to Resolve? How little or nothing canst thou say against them? Can thou bring any Reason, that is Reason indeed against these or any of these Reasons of the Lord? Darest thou say that ever a one of them is false, or insufficient? And what are the Reasons which you have on the contrary to hinder you from Resolving? Forsooth, because your sins are sweet, you would fain have the pleasure of them a little longer yet; O wretched Souls! that find more pleasure in the abusing

abusing of your Maker and Redeemer, than in loving, honouring, and pleasing him : That delight more in serving the flesh, and the Devil, than in serving God, and seeking after his Favour and your own Salvation. You are a hundred times madder than a man that lyeth tumbling himself in his dung, and will not rise out of it to receive a Kingdom, because it is so soft and so sweet that he is loth yet to leave it. You are foolish ~~more~~ X than *Nebuchadnezzar* had been, if he had been loth to return again to his Kingdom, because he would fain stay longer among the beasts of the field, among whom in his distraction he had betaken himself, *Dans* 4. 31, 32, 33. And what other Reasons have you against Resolving ? Forsooth you shall be mockt or jested at by others ; By whom I pray you ? Not a man but a miserable fool will do it. Yea but you are told you must forsake all, and be ready to die for Christ, if he call you to it. Very true ! and can you keep that which he calleth you to forsake ? How long will you keep it ? Silly Souls ! do you not know that you forsake it by not forsaking it, and lose all, by saving any thing ? and that you have no way to save it but by losing and forsaking it. Suppose you were by enemies banished out of *England*, and upon pain of death you must be gone within a twelve-moneth : And a King that loveth you inviteth you to his Countrey, and tells you for the poor livings that you have lost, he will make you Lords and Princes, so you will bring with you the little goods you have, and leave nothing behind you. Hereupon one man takes the next wind, and ships over all his riches, that he may have it when he comes there : Another saith, I am loth to leave my goods ; I have a while longer to stay here, and what shall I do without them ? I am loth to see

the habitation of my Ancestors impoverished : And so when his time is expired, he is fain to leave them all behind him, and hath none that will receive him in the Countrey where he must abide. Which of these think you is the wiser man ? Which of them was it that lost his goods, and which did save them ? I speak to you but such another parable as Christ used to you himself, *Luke 16. 2, 3, 4, 9.* where you are advised to send your riches before you ; and to make you friends of the *mammon* of unrighteousness, that when you die you may be received into the everlasting habitations.

I know there are other vain delusions that hinder you from Resolving : I will not call them Reasons ; for they are unreasonable. I shall only say this to you, that if there be ever a man of you that heareth his words, that dare be such a Blasphemier, as to reproach the Laws and Image of his maker, and say that he hath made you too strict a Law, and laid too heavy a task upon you, and a Heavenly life is troublesome and unnecessary : If there be a man of you, that is so devilish, as that you dare plead the Devils cause, and justifie his work before the Lords, and say that it is better to please the flesh ; let that man prepare himself to make good these words before the Lord, and his Holy Angels ; and be sure that he shall be there put to it in another manner than he is here by me : and if you have such Reasons as you will stand to before the Bar of God, to prove the Devil the better Master, and an unholie life to be better than a Heavenly ; see then that you look them up, and there make your best of them ; and expect to live with the Master that you served, and to reap as you sowed, and eat the fruit of your fleshly ways, which you took to be the best.

best. But if you have no such Reasons, but your Consciences are convinced that God should be served, and sin should be speedily forsaken, and Heaven should be provided for above all ; *Resolve then to do it before you stir : Or else say plainly, I have no Reason to be wicked, but because I will be wicked : I will forsake God, and damn my own Soul without any Reason, because I will do it.* And if you are at this pass, you may take your course.

11. Another thing that I would intreat you to consider of is this ; *It is a most base and treacherous abuse of God, to make any question of this which you are so long unresolved of.* I confess, when a blind man hath raised such a question, it is lawful for a reasonable man to answer it. But in him that makes a doubt of such a thing, as its a shame to himself, so it is a hainous indignity to God. If you had a chaste and modest woman to your wife, I think she would take it for an injury, if you should but make a question of it, whether she or a common whore be the honestest woman ? If your wife or children should bring before you a Hobby-horse or an Ass, and make a great question of it, whether you or the Ass be the comlier, or the wiser ; How would you take this of them ? If you should bring an Ideot or a mad man before your Prince, and make a question whether he or they be the wiser man : or if you set a Rebel before him, and make a question which of them hath the better title to the Crown ; what entertainment might you expect ? I tell you it is ten thousand thousand times a baser affront and wrong to God, to set the pleasure of sin before him, and make a question which of them is the better ; and to set your riches, and your sports, and your drunkenness and gluttony, and your whoredom, and your

revenge, in competition with your Redeemer, and everlasting Glory, and to make a question which of them is to be preferred. To make once a question whether God or flesh should be pleased : whether Christ or the world should be loved, and followed ; Whether the Holy Ghost or the Devil should dwell in us, and guide us ? Whether the Saints of God, or the servants of the Devil should be our chosen company ? Whether the Word and Ministers of Christ, or the examples and words of wicked men, should more prevail with us ? Whether Heaven or Earth should be more carefully sought after ? Whether a Holy, or a careless, wicked life be more to be desired ? Or whether it be better to turn to God, or not ? I say, to make such a question as this, or one of these, is little better than to put a scorn upon the God of Heaven ; and favoureth of such malice as is more like a Devil than a reasonable man ; or else of such folly, as is below the Devil, and as none of you would be guilty of in the matters of this world : If one should but make a comparison between you and some deformed monster, or between your house and a swine-stie, though he gave you the better, I think you would take it as a scorn, that he should make such a comparison or question ? Much more may God so take it, when you make a question betwixt sin and him. There is *but one* Infinite, unconceivable, perfect Good : and shall he be abased by such a question ? There is *but one* thing that is contrary to God in all the world, that is worse than the Devil himself, and that is sin : and shall this be put in question or comparison with God ? There is *but One* that hath Loved us to the death, with a matchless, unconceivable, saving Love, and that is Jesus Christ : And there is *but one* thing that is a deadly

deadly enemy to us and him, and that would damn us, when he is endeavouring to save us : and that is sin : And must there be a question or comparison between these ? There is *One* Sanctifying Spirit, that would cleanse, and heal, and save us : and there is a malicious spirit that would deceive us, defile us, and destroy us : And must there be any question or comparison made between these ? There is *but one* Eternal Happiness, and *One* Holy way to it : and there is *but One* everlasting misery, and a fleshly, filthy, sinful way to it : And must there be made any question which of these should be preferred ? Consider I beseech you what you do : And if it be so vile a thing to make any question of it, what is it then to be still unresolved ? Yea and to choose the worser part, and stick to it in your heart and life ?

12. Consider also that *Present Resolution would put an end to a great many fruitless, troublesome deliberations and delays.* If a man had but a weighty business of the world upon his hand, that his estate or life lieth on, it is a perplexity to him as long as he is unresolved what course he should take : It will be troubling him when he should rest, and break his sleep : it will fill him with musings, and distract his mind, and even make him Melancholy. And how can it choose but be a troublesome distracting thing to your mind, to be unresolved what course to take for your Everlasting state ? I know some hearts are so desperately hardened and past feeling, (*Ephes. 4. 19.*) and some mens Consciences so feared as with an hot iron, (*1 Tim. 4. 2.*) that they can throw away all thoughts of Resolution, and never be much troubled : But I hope that many are *not so* desperate : It is not thus with all that are unconverted. How long have

some of your minds been troubled whether to turn or not? *Resolve* man, if thou love thy Soul, and put an end to such troubles.

13. Consider also, that *Resolving will put an end to a great many of troublesome Temptations that do assault you, and will break the heart of Satans hopes.* As long as you are unresolved, he hath still possession of you, and is still in hopes to keep possession. And as long as he hath any hope, he will never give over, but will be repairing his Garrison, and making up all the breaches that the Ordinances of God had made. When one temptation takes not, he will be offering you another, and will be following and disquieting you day and night: But if once he see you firmly *Resolved*, his hopes will fail him, and you may be much freer from his temptations than you were before. I do not say he will give over; For even when you are broken away from him, he will make after you again. But it is a greater advantage to you to fight against him in the open field, under such a Captain as Jesus Christ, that will assure you of the victory, than to be in his own prison with his fetters on your heels. You know the way to be troubled with an unwelcome suiter, is to delay your answer, and take time to consider of it: and the way to be eased of him, is to give him a peremptory Resolute answer. And when he seeth you Resolved, he will cease.

14. Moreover, till you are *Resolved of your Conversion*, you cannot Rationally *Resolve of any one word or action of your lives*: Nay till then they are all misemployed to their hurt. For no man can *Resolve* of the *Means* till he is resolved of the *End*. You must *Resolve* *whither to go*, before you can *Resolve which way to go*. Before Conversion mens *End* is wrong; Their *Inten-*
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tion and business is to please the flesh : and all their thoughts, and words, and actions, that have such an End, are wicked and pernicious. Till you are Resolved by Conversion to be for God, you have never a right End (in a prevailing fence :) and therefore you cannot order one thought, nor word, nor deed aright. I tell you, every thought you think, and every word you speak, and every deed you do while you are unconverted, are so many steps towards Hell, except only those that tend towards Conversion, and some way further it. Resolve therefore of this, or you can Resolve of nothing.

15. Moreover, if you would presently and firmly Resolve, you would ease your friends and the Ministers of Christ of much of their sorrows, and fears, and cares for you : and of much of the most troublesome part of their work. As long as you are unconverted, they can look on you but as the heirs of Hell, that will be quickly in those torments, if conversion prevent it not ; and therefore their hearts are full of sorrow for you, when you sorrow not for your selves : and their care is how they might prevent your damnation, which they know without Conversion can never be done. Many a groan doth your Misery cost them ; and many a thought have they of your danger, which you are not aware of. O what a grief is it to believing Ministers, to see so many of their people in the power of Satan, and the high-way to Hell, after all their care and labour for their recovery ? We cannot say that the unconverted shall certainly perish, because we have yet hopes that they may be Converted, though they be not : But we know that if they die in the case that they are in, there is no hope of them at all : and we know they are uncertain to live an hour : And therefore as long as they are in this Condition, how can we chuse but be filled

with fear, and grief, and care for them ? All the troubles that befall a faithful Minister, in his worldly affairs, by crosses and persecutions, are nothing to the trouble that your sin and misery bringeth to their minds. O what a comfortable life were it for a Minister to live with bread and water among a people that would obey the Gospel, and give us hopes that we should live with them in Heaven ! O how cheerfully may we study for them, and preach to them, when we see that it is not lost upon them ! How willingly should we prepare them the bread of life, when we see they feed and live upon it ! How joyfully may we pray and praise God with them, when we think how they must joyn with us in the Celestial Praises ? O Sirs, I beseech you grudge not your Ministers this comfort ; Do not destroy your selves to grieve and trouble them. O put them once out of their fears and grief for you, by your *Resolving, and speedy return to God* : That they that have many a time thought in their hearts, *I am afraid this poor sinner will never be recovered ; I am afraid he will be a firebrand in Hell* : may now rejoice with you when they see you coming home, and may meet you as the Father himself doth meet his prodigal children, and weep over you for joy, as they were wont to do in sorrow. You would ease our hearts of abundance of sad thoughts, if we could but perceive you once *Resolved*, and see you come home. Now you think our preaching harsh to you, because we tell you so much of sin and of damnation ; and you think our discipline more harsh, when we refuse to have communion with you. But if you would once Resolve and Turn, how gladly should we open our doors and our hearts to you : and how gladly should we turn the stream of our preaching, and tell you of nothing

nothing but Christ, and Heaven, and peace, and comfort, further than your own necessities should require it? What say you Sirs to this reasonable request? Will you Resolve without any more ado, and ease us of our grief and fears, and give us *but leave* to preach more comfortable Doctrine to you?

16. Moreover consider, that *you have much work to do when you are Resolved and Converted; and a great way to go when you have begun your journey towards Heaven: and till you are Resolved, none of this can be done.* You can go no further, till Conversion have set you in the right way. Till then, the further you go, the further you are out of the way. Will you be unresoled till the night come on? Shall all the rest of your work be undone? Will you begin your race when you should be at the end? Alas you should be able to say as *Paul, 2 Tim. 4. 8. I have fought a good fight: I have finished my course: henceforth is laid up for me a crown of righteousness: when as you cannot yet say, I have begun my course: I am set in the right way.*

17. Consider also that *Resolution maketh works easie and successful.* The *resolute* Army is seldom conquered. A *resolute* traveller will go through with his journey, and it is easier to himself: His spirits are excited; and doing it with vivacity, he findeth less trouble in it. A slow and lazy pace doth sometime soonest weary us. A slow motion is most easily stopt, when a swift one bears down that which would resist it. A man that Resolvedly sets himself to the Work of God, and is past any further deliberating of the matter, and is at a point with all the world, will make a pleasure of that which will stop and stall an unresolved professor. Resolve therefore for your own success and ease.

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I tell you, by *Resolving* it is that you must conquer, and by *conquering*, you must obtain the Crown. The unresolved are wavering at every assault, like cowardly souldiers, even ready to run before they fight. They will not be at the cost or labour : they are soon weary : They cannot say *Nay* to an old Companion, or a tempting bait. But the Resolved breaks through all, and treads that under his feet as dirt, which another sells his Soul for. If he meet with reproaches and scorns from men, he remembreth that Christ foretold him this, and suffered much more of the like before him. If his friends turn enemies for the Gospel sake, he saith, *I was told of this before, even that I must be hated of all men for Christ.* If he be ticed by lewd and wanton company, he saith as *David*, Psal. 119. 115. *Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the Commandments of my God.* If he be tempted with rewards and honours in the world, he will not stand wavering and longing after it, as *Balaam* ; but he will say as the same *Balaam* was forced to do : *If you will give me a house full of Gold and Silver, I cannot go beyond the Word of the Lord.* And let their money perish with them, that think all the Gold in the world worth the peace of a good Conscience and the favour of God. If he be threatened by men, to move him to forsake his duty, he saith, *Whether it be better to obey God or man, judge ye?* If he hear seducers, he is rooted in the Spirit, and the infallible Word, and is not shaken by every wind. If he see never so many fall off by backsliding, he saith, *It was not only for their company that I chose the holy way : God is still the same : and Heaven is the same : and Scripture is the same : and therefore I am Resolved to be the same.* If God afflict him by poverty, sickness, or other tryals, he saith, *I did not become a Christian*

Christian to scape affliction, but to scape damnation ! If he kill me, yet will I trust in him : Shall I receive good at the hands of God, and not evil ? Naked came I out of my mothers womb, and naked must I return to dust ; the Lord giveth, the Lord taketh away : blessed be his name. If oppressing enemies insult over him, he can say as Mic. 7. 8, 9. *Rejoyce not against me O mine enemy ; when I fall I shall arise : when I sit in darkness, the Lord shall be a light to me : I will bear the Indignation of the Lord, because I have sinned against him, until he plead my cause, and execute Judgement for me : He will bring me forth to the light, and I shall behold his Righteousness.* If the wicked cast in his teeth his profession, and the name of his God, he *rejoyceth that he is counted worthy to suffer for that Name, and yet he will hope to see the goodness of the Lord in the Land of the living.* And if he must go to Heaven through poverty, and a mean estate, he hath *learned to want, as well as to abound, and in what estate soever he be, therewith to be contented.* And so in the work of Conversion it self, for want of Resolution, many stick long in the birth, and they are hanging so long between Heaven and Hell, that its a wonder of Mercy that God doth not cut them off and let them perish. But the well Resolved Soul doth deal more faithfully with the light that is revealed to him, and doth not stand strugling so long against it, nor hold Christ and his Spirit so long in hand ; but is glad to make sure work in so great a business, and take so good a match while it is offered : And being engaged once, he *is firm as Mount Zion, that cannot be moved.* *Resolve therefore that your work may be the more easie, and successful ; and conquer by Resolving,*



18. I suppose you dare not Resolve against Conversion, and a Heavenly life ! And why then will you not Resolve for it ? What purpose you to do for the time to come ? Is it your Resolution to live and die as you are ? Haye you not purposes in your mind to Repent hereafter ? Dare you say, I am Resolved never to be Converted ? Some may be so desperate ; but I think it is but few even of the ungodly. Why this shews that there is a secret conviction in your consciences : O do not stifle it : Neutrality never saved Soul. Seeing you dare not Resolve against it, Resolve for it.

19. Consider I beseech you, how much it doth concern your selves, to have this question well and speedily Resolved. God asketh you whether you will be Converted and Sanctified or not ? Resolve this question, and you Resolve your selves of a great many more that depend upon it. The answer to this, must be the answer to the rest. If the question were, whether you will be pardoned or no ? Whether you will live in Heaven or Hell for ever ? Whether you will dwell with God and Angels, or with Devils ? you would not be long in answering this. You would Resolve without an hours delay. Why ? this is the question Sirs : but the answer to it, must be the answer to the first question : For without Sanctification, there is no Salvation : If you will not be Converted, you shall be condemned whether you will or no : For God hath Resolved of this already, and there is no resisting the Resolution of God. The true state of the question is, Whether you will Turn, or burn : choose you whether ; for it must be one. O therefore if you will but Resolve Christ and us this one question, that you will be Converted, Christ will Resolve you the principal questions, that concern you in the world, even whether you shall be pardoned or saved,

saved, and where and with whom, you must live for ever.

20. Lastly consider, that if you stay till you receive the sentence of death, its two to one but that will force you to Resolve : But a forced Resolution will not serve turn : and then it will be very hard for you to discern whether it be any better than miserly from your fears. You put off all till sickness come, and you see once that you must die : there's no Remedy ; and then you will cry, *O if the Lord woulde but recover me, and try me once again with life, I woulde delay no longer, but I woulde become a new man, and live a Holy and Heavely life ; I am resolved of it by the Grace of God.* Yea ; but who knows whether these last Resolutions be sincere ? We hear abundance speak this in their sickness, that never turn when they come to health, but forget all, and live in a manner as they did before. Is it not most likely to be only the fear of death that makes you take up these Resolutions ? If it be so, they will never save you if you die, nor hold you to your promises if you live ; For it is not bare fear that is true Conversion ; but its a changed heart, that is fallen in Love with God and Holiness, and into a settled hatred of former sins. No late Repentance and Resolutions but these, will be any thing worth, as to the saving of your Souls : And therefore if you should have true Resolutions at the last (which is too rare) you cannot choose but be much in doubt of them, when you find so much of fear upon your spirit, and consider that you never would Resolve till then. And therefore if you would have a Com'ortable change, Resolve now in your prosperity, before the face of death affright you to it, and those fears and the latenes do make you question the truth and soundness of it, and so deprive you of

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the comfort which you have so much need of at a dying hour.

And thus I have given you twenty Considerations to perswade you, if it may be, presently to *Resolve*. I am sure there is truth, and reason, and weight in them; but what good they will do you I am not sure, because I know not how you will receive them.

IV. And now I come to the last part of my task; which is to *Direct* you how to perform the work that I have perswaded you to. But because it is meerly the *Determination of the Will*, it is *perswasion* that must do more to the work than *Direction*. And therefore I shall only desire you to look back upon the qualifications of sound Resolution, which I before laid down to you, and then take heed of the hinderances in your way, and to set your selves to do your duty.

Remember that I before told you, that it is not a holy, saving Resolution, unless it be 1. *Entire* for the matter of it, comprehending all that is Essential to Christianity: 2. And unless you *Resolve* upon *present* obedience without delay: 3. And also unless it be *Absolute* and peremptory, taking Christ for better and worse, without any reserve: 4. And unless it be *well grounded*: 5. And unless it be *built on the strength of Christ*, and not only a carnal confidence of your own: 6. And unless it be *habitual and firm*, and become your ordinary frame and byas, and as it were the new Nature, and inclination of your Souls. By this much you see already what manner of Resolution it is that you must have.

The next thing is, to advise you of the hinderances that you may avoid them. 1. The principal hinderance of

of Resolution is *Secret Unbelief* ; when Everlasting life is taken but as an uncertainty, or men have no more but a slight Opinion of it. The Cure of this disease, I have often, and a little before delivered you.

2. Another thing that hindereth Resolution is *Inconsiderateness*, of which also I have spoken purposelly before.

3. Another hinderance is a *sleepy Insensibility*, when the heart is hardened, and men are past feeling. We cannot tell how to awaken these men to be sensible of the things that should move them to Resolve. Of this also I have spoken by it self.

4. Another great hinderance is the *natural strangeness and averseness* of the mind of corrupted man, to these high and Spiritual things. So that we drive men by all our Arguments against the byas of their sinful habits. And those habits plead against us more forcibly without a word of reason, than all the reason in the world could do. See therefore that you keep under changing means till your hearts be changed : And the perusing of such weighty Arguments as we offer you, may be of use to the changing of your hearts : For God useth to work on the Will by the Understanding : And therefore Light hath an aptitude to change the Will it self.

5. Moreover, the *rooted Interest of this world*, doth much hinder men from Resolving to turn : Its always drawing them another way, or putting objections and cavils into their minds ; and if they will needs Resolve, it is this that secretly enticeth them to reserves, and to resign themselves to God but with conditions and exceptions ; and so makes them Hypocrites when they think themselves Converts ; and cheats them with a half deceitful Resolution, instead of one that

that is absolute and firm. Against this impediment also I have spoken before.

6. Another hindrance is, *The neernes of fleshly exercizing objects.* When the Coverous man seeth his houses and lands, his goods and money, the very sight of them breaks the heart of all his better Resolutions. The drunkard seems to be Resolved till he sees the cup, and then his Resolution is broken. The Whoremonger seemeth to be Resolved, till the bait is brought neer him, and then he goes as an Ox to the slaughter, and as a fool to the correction of the stocks. Certainly if these Resolutions were found, they would either cause men to fly from the bait, and not come neer it, or else to refuse it when it is presented them: In the course of their lives their Resolutions would govern them, if they were sincere.

7. And Satan himself will do all that he can to hinder you when he sees you ready to Resolve. He knows that he must bestir him now or never. You never put him to it indeed till you are Resolving to forsake him. One block or other he will be sure then to cast in your way; Either he tells you, it is but folly and melancholy to trouble your self with these matters: or that you may be saved without all this ado: or that God is more merciful than to cast away all that be not Sanctified: or that Godliness doth but trouble and distract people: and that the professors of it are secretly no better than others; and that it is but Hypocrite for them to make such a stir with their Religion: and that we must be moderate in our Godliness; and take heed of being Godly over much: A hundred such foolish suggestions as these, the Devil hath at hand to cast in your way, when he seeth you ready to Resolve.

If these will not serve, he well set some of his wicked Disciples on railing or deriding you! And perhaps some cunning fool a cavelling with you, to see if they can over wit you, and draw you back.

If that will not do, perhaps he will open the falls of Professours to you, and labour to perswade you that *all are such*: Or he will shew you what divisions and differences are among them, or he will take advantage of some difficulties in Religion, or some controversies in which he sees you already engaged to a party: or he will tell you of some false doctrine that some forward Professours may be tainted with, to make them, and consequently Godliness it self more odious, or at least suspected to you. If all this will not do, he will endeavour to set your very parents, or natural kindred against you, that those that should most promote your Salvation, and on whom your livelihood much dependeth, shall become your enemies, and hate you for offering to give up your selves to Christ: If that will not do, he will endeavour to entice you with the baits of fleshly pleasure, or of preferments, or much business, or merry company, or some great matters that you may hope for in the world. And usually this snare is the strongest of all. Or else he will tell you that if needs you will Resolve, it is time enough hereafter: You may yet take more of your pleasure or commodity before you leave it: Yet you may suck the breasts of the world a little dryer, and then turn to God and cast it off. If all this will not prevail with you, he will tell you it is now too late; you have sinned so long, or such hainous sins that God will not have mercy on you: he will make you believe that God hath utterly forsaken you, and there is no remedy: and you may as well spare your thoughts of Turning now, for Christ will not receive or welcome you: and therefore it is even as good go on, and

take up the rest that the world can afford you, for there is no hope of better. But the most desperate temptation of all the rest, is, to put some blasphemous, unbelieving thoughts into your mind: especially if you fall into company with Infidels, that will draw you to question the Word of God, and the Immortality of the Soul, and the truth of Christianity, or the life to come whether there be any such things or not: Where these once take, and are received with approbation, the Soul is in a miserable case: Though I know many tempted, melancholy Christians, are haunted with such temptations, who yet abhor them, and do well at last, for all this. Sometimes also when he cannot take you off from Resolving, he will lead you among some disputing Opinionists, and they shall tice you to take up with their Opinionative Religiousness instead of true Sanctification, of which I have spoke in the eighth Direction. By these and many such wiles as these, doth the old serpent do all that possibly he can, to hinder you from sound Resolution and Conversion. And therefore you must be armed against his temptations, and meet them with abhorrence: and if you feel them too hard for you, go daily to Christ by Faith and Prayer for renewed strength: and call to your faithful friends, and Ministers for help. Open your case to some one that's able, experienced, and faithful; that he may help you with Arguments to resist those temptations which you know not how yourselves to deal with. God hath appointed Pastors in his Church to be Spiritual Fathers in the Lord; and when they have sowed in you the seed of eternal life, they watch over it till they see the blade and fruit: They travail as in birth of you, till Christ be formed in you. It is their office to help you; and God giveth to them that are faithful, abilities and affections agreeable to their office.

office. And therefore lean upon the hand of your faithful guides, and think not to break through temptation's alone, and get to Heaven without the means that God hath appointed you.

Having told you the Hinderances, and what to do against them, I shall add but these two words more of Direction. 1. *When you are Resolving, give up your selves to God with a Holy Covenant or Vow.* I mean not any *rash vow*, nor any *unnecessary vow*; but the same that you made in *Baptism*, which your age it self doth call you to renew, but your sins against it do call you more.

Perhaps you'll say, that you are not able to perform it by your own strength, and you are uncertain of Gods assistance; and therefore how can you promise or vow.

To this I answer: 1. You may be sure that this Objection is frivolous, because it makes against the frequent, express Commands of God, the practice of his Church in all ages, and the nature of Christianity it self: God hath in all Ages been pleased to receive men into his service and Church in a Covenant way; and *Baptism* it self is our solemn Covenanting with him: and the *Lords Supper* is appointed for a solemn renewing of it: And indeed it is implicitly and virtually renewed by a true Christian every day of his life. In every duty he gives up himself to God: And if he should cease this Heart covenant, he would cease to be a Christian: for the very essence of his Christianity consisteth in it. It is his Faith it self.

2. And when you covenant for the time to come, you do not take on you to *foretell* infallibly your own perseverance; but you *Profess* your present *consent* to be Christ's, and to continue his, and you engage your selves thereto. And should you not choose the strictest en-

gagements? 1. Where there is the greatest need of them, because of the looseness of the heart, and the strength of temptations, that would draw us away; and 2. Where there is the most absolute necessity, because if we mis-carry we are undone: 3. And where you are already obliged by Gods Commands whether you vow or not: 4. And where God hath made your consent to the Obligation of necessity to Salvation. He that intends to keep Covenant, and knows that he must keep it, or be condemned, hath little reason to be loath to make it.

3. And for Gods assistance, you have much more cause to expect it in the way of Covenanting, which himself hath appointed you, than in the neglect of his appointed means.

Object. But if I did it in Baptism, what need I do it again?

Answe. I told you the Covenant must be continued and renewed through the whole course of our lives, but especially after a notorious violation of your former promise: You once gave up your selves to God, and you have proved false to him, and it is a wonder of Mercy that ever he will trust you more, or enter any more into Covenant with you: and will you draw back from such Mercy, and such a duty as this?

Object. But I am afraid of breaking my vows again, and it is better to forbear them, than not to perform them.

Answe. 1. This Reason makes as much against the inward Vow and Resolution of the heart; so that by this rule you would never be Christians for fear of falling away, and being worse. 2. There is an absolute necessity of your Resolving, and Covenanting, and of Keeping your Resolutions and Covenants: And when it must be kept, or you are utterly undone; its but a mad-ness

ness to refuse to make the Covenant for fear of breaking it : For this is but to make choice of an easier place in Hell , for fear of having a worse , if you should resolve for Heaven : When as Heaven is set open before you , and you thus wilfully cast away your hopes. Nay your place in Hell is not like to be the easier , when you thus deliberately , and wilfully refuse the Covenant. 3. Your Resolutions and Holy Vows , are means of Gods appointment to keep you from breaking his imposed Covenant. Is not a Resolved , Engaged , Devoted Christian liker to be accepted , and to persevere , than a waverer that saith , I dare not vow , for fear lest I perform not.

(In unnecessary matters I had rather you were too backward to vow. Some will vow poverty , and some a single life , and some will vow that they will never drink wine or strong drink more , such vows as these may be good for some , in cases of special necessity , as the last remedies of a dangerous disease ; but they are not for all , nor rashly to be made. But the Resolution and Vow of cleaving unto God in Faith and Holy Obedience , and of renouncing the flesh , the world , and the Devil ; this is for all , and must be made and kept by all that will be saved.)

2. Direct. And as I would have you second your Resolution by a Covenant with God , so I would advise you (ordinarily) to go further , and openly Profess the Resolution and Covenant that you have made . For as with the heart men believe unto Righteousness , so with the mouth Confession is made unto Salvation , Rom. 10. 10. Christ will confess those that confess him , and disown , and be ashamed of those that are ashamed of him. When you have escaped the greatest misery in the world , and obtained the greatest Mercy in the world , the greatness of it

calleth you to acknowledge it, and give Glory to God, Go to your old Companions in sin, and tell them what God hath revealed to you and done for you ! Tell them, *O Sirs, I see now that which I never saw before : I wonder how I could venture so madly upon sin ! and how I could make light of God, of Christ, of Death, of Judgment, and Everlasting life ! I have been hitherto your Companion in sin, but I would not take the same course again for all the world : I see now there is a better portion hereafter to be obtained, which I was mindless of : I see now we were all this while making merry at the brink of Hell, and there was but a step between us and death : Now I see, that the course that we have taken is wicked and deceitful, and will not serve turn : If I serve the flesh, it will reward me but with rottenness : I will therefore hereafter serve that God, that will certainly reward me with Everlasting life. I beseech you Sirs, come away with me, and see and try what I have seen and tryed : I have lived with you in sin, O now let us joyn together in Repentance, and a Holy life : I shall be glad of your company to Heaven, but if you will not do it, take your course : For my part I am Resolved, by the Grace of God I am fully Resolved to be from this day forward a New man, and never to joyn with you more in a fleshly and ungodly life. Never tempt me or persuade me to it : for I am Resolved.*

Thus if you will declare your Resolutions to others, and seek to win them, you may possibly do them good : but however you will be the deeper engaged to God your selves.

Yea, though I would have no ostentation of Conversion, nothing done rashly in publick, nor without the advice of a faithful Minister before hand : yet with these Cautions, I must say, that its a shame that we hear no more in publick of the Conversion of sinners, As Baptism is

is to be in publick, that the Congregation may witness your engagement, and pray for you, and rejoice at the receiving of a member: So the solemn renewing of the same Covenant by Repentance after a wicked life, should ordinarily be in publick, to give warning to others to avoid the sin, and to give God the honour, and to have the Prayers of the Church, and to satisfie them of our Repentance, that they may have Communion with us. The *Papists* do more offend (of the two) in so much confining Confession and Penitence, to the Priests ear in secret, and not bringing it before the Church, than they do in making a Sacrament of it. I wonder that people should every day thrust into our hands their requests to pray for them when they are sick; and that it is so rare a matter to have any desire our Prayers, for the pardon of all the sins of their natural unconverted state.

I would here seriously advise all those that it concerneth, that when God hath shewed them so great a Mercy as to Convert them, and make them New Creatures, they would go to their faithful Minister, and by his advice, put up such a bill as this, *Such a man of this Parish, having long lived in blindness, and deadness, and ungodliness, (and name the particular sins, if they were publicly known,) and being by the great Mercy of God convinced of his sin, and misery: and sustained with some hopes of Mercy by the Blood and Merits of Jesus Christ, and being now Resolved by the Grace of God, to forsake this fleshly, worldly life, and to give up himself to Christ and Holiness, doth earnestly intreat the Church to pray for him, that his many, and horious sins may be all forgiven, and that God would again receive him into Mercy, and that he may hold on in Faith and Holiness to the last, and never turn again to the course of his iniquity.*

And if the Minister think it meet, refuse not to make

your selves and open Confession of your former life of sin and misery, and to Profess openly your Resolution to walk with God for the time to come.

This course should be more ordinary with us : and if Conversion it self were not so rare , or else so defective, that it doth too little quicken men to a sense of duty , and sin, and Mercy, or so doubtful, and by slow degrees, that it is scarce discerned by many that have it ; were it not for some of these ; more ordinary would it be, to the great rejoicing and benefit of the Church.

The Conclusion. And now I have given you Directions in the most great and necessary busines in this world ; They are such as I received of God , and if Faithfully practised will put your Salvation past all hazard. But what they have done , or what they will do , I cannot tell ; but must leave the Issue to God and you. Its pury eternal Glory should be lost, for want of yielding to so holy , and sweet, and reasonable a course. It is lamentable to observe, what ignorant,base, unworthy thoughts the most have of the very Office of the holy Ghost, who is the sanctifier of all that God will save. The very name of *Regeneration and Sanctification* is not understood by some , and is but matter of derision to others : and the most think that it is another kind of matter than indeed it is. To be baptized , and come to Church , and to say some cold and heartless Prayers , and to forbear some gross disgraceful sins , is all the sanctification that most are acquainted with : (and all have not this :) And thus they debase the work of the holy Ghost. If a Prince have built a sumptuous Palace , and you will shew men a Swine-stie , and say , [*This is the Palace that the Prince hath bin so long a building*] were not this to abuse

abuse him by contempt? If he build a Navy, and you shew a man two or three pig-troughs, and say [*These are the Kings ships*] would he not take it for a scorn? Take heed of such dealing with the holy Ghost. Remember what it is to believe in the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost: and remember that you were Baptized into the name of the Father, Son, and holy Ghost: And do you not yet know why? nor know the meaning of your Baptismal Covenant? It is not only to believe that there are three Persons in the Trinity, but to consent to the Relations and duty to them, in respect to their several Relations and works. If the Father had not Created you, how could you have been men? The Lord of nature must be acknowledged as the *End* and the Governour of nature, and accordingly obeyed. And this is to believe and be Baptized into the Name of God the Father. If the Son had not Redeemed you, you had bin as the Devils were, forsaken and given over to dispair. The Purchaser, Procurer, and Author of Grace, of Pardon, and Salvation must be acknowledged to be such, and himself and his Salvation accordingly accepted, and his terms submitted to. And this is to believe in the name of the Son, and in baptism we make profession hereof. And certainly the work of the holy Ghost is as necessary to your Salvation. Without the sanctifying work of the Spirit, you could never be delivered from sin and Satan, nor restored to Gods Image, and consequently could never be the Members of Christ, nor have any saving benefit by his Sufferings. Would you not think him unworthy to live, that would reproach the *Fathers work of nature*, and say, that the whole Creation is but some poor contemptible work? And would you not think him unworthy the name of a Christian that had contemptible thoughts of the *Sons Redemption*, as if we could

could be saved as well without a Saviour, or as if it were but some poor and trivial commodity that Christ had purchased us? I know you would confess the misery of that man, that believeth no better in the *Father*, and the *Son*. And how comes it to pass that you think not of your own misery, that believe no better in the *holy Ghost*? Do not you debase the *Sanctifying office* of the *holy Spirit*, when you shew us your knowledge, and parts, and outward duties, and civility, and tell us that *these* are the work of *Sanctification*? What? is *Sanctification* but such a thing as this? Why? *Holiness is a new Life and Spirit in us*: and these that you talk of are but a few flowers that are stuck upon a Corps to keep it a while from stinking among men, till death convey it to a burial in Hell. O Sirs, *Sanctification* is another kind of matter than the forsaking of some of your fouler vices, and speaking well of a Godly life. It is not the patching up of the *Old man*, but the Creating of a *New man*. I give you warning therefore from God that you think not basely of the work of the *holy Ghost*; and that you think no more to be saved without the *Sanctifying work of the Spirit*, than without the *redeeming work of the Son*, or *Creation, Government, or Love of the Father*. *Sanctification* must turn the very bent and stream of heart and life to God, to Christ, to Heaven: it must mortifie *Carnal Self*, and the world to you: it must make you a people Devoted, Consecrated, and Resigned up to God, with all that you have: it must make all sin odious to you, and make God the Love and Desire of your Souls: so that it must give you a new Heart, a new End, a new Master, a new Law, and a new Conversation. This is that noble Heavenly work which the *holy Ghost* hath vouchsafed to make the business of his office: To slight and despise this, is to slight and despise the

the holy Ghost: To refuse this, is to refuse the holy Ghost: and not to believe in him: to be without this work, is to be without the holy Ghost: and *if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, the same is none of his*, Rom. 8. 9. The *holy Catholick Church* is composed of all through the world that have this work upon them, and therefore it is called *Holy*. The *Communion of Saints*, is the blessed Vital fellowship of these *Sanctified Ones*: For *these only is the Resurrection unto blessedness, and the life everlasting with the Lord of life*: for all others is the Resurrection of Condemnation, and the everlasting punishment.

But if the other two Articles of our Faith have been so denied by the blind, it is less wonder if this be so. Some Hereticks denied God to be the Creator of the world; and because they saw so much evil in the world, they said that it was made by Devils or evil Angels (who indeed made the sin, but not the world,) So dealt the Jews by the *Son*, and the *Second Article* of our Faith: The Sacrifice of Bulls and Goats, and such Beasts, was all the Sacrifice for sin that they believed in. And thus dealt the multitude of the *ungodly* by the *Spirit*. Indeed they know not themselves sufficiently to know the need and worth of *Sanctification*. They are too whole to value the skill and care of Christ or the holy Ghost. The insensibility of spiritual death and misery, and thinking too lightly of *Original Corruption*, and too well of our depraved nature, is both the cause of many of the Heresies of the learned, and of the common contempt of Christ, and the *Spirit*, and recovering grace, in all the unregenerate. For it is not possible that men should have any deeper sense of the need or worth of the remedy, than they have of the greatness of their sin and misery.

O Sirs, did we not come upon this great disadvantage to you, that we speak to dead men, that have indeed a natural

natural life, which doth but take pleasure in their spiritual death, how confidently should we expect to prevail with you all ! But while you think lightly of your disease, we can expect no better, but that you think as lightly of Christ and holiness, and all the means that tend to your recovery, and think of the new man, as the Poets fabled of the Promethean race, that it grows out of the earth (of your own poor, sorry purposes and performances) like ordinary plants.

Truly Sirs, I have led you even as far as I can : and what more to say to you, or what more to do for you, to procure your Conversion I do not know. If it had been in my power to have shewed you Heaven and Hell it self, that you might better have known the matters that we speak of, I think I should have done it. But God will not have men live by fence in this life, but by Faith. If I could but help you all to such a knowledge and apprehension of these invisible things, as the worst of you shall have as soon as you are dead, then I should make but little doubt of your Conversion and Salvation. Sure if you had but such a sight, the force of it would so work upon you, that before I went out of the Congregation, you would all cry out that you are *resolved* to be new Creatures. But though this be beyond my power, and though I cannot shew you your great and wonderful things that every eye here must shortly see : yet I come not to you without a *glas* of Gods own making, and in that *glas* you may see them. *There* if you have but an eye of Faith, you may see that God that you have so long offended, and that now so earnestly inviteth you to return : *There* you may see that Crucified Christ that hath opened you a way for Repentance by his Blood, and pleadeth that Blood with you for the melting of your impenitent, obstinate hearts. *There* you may see

see the odious face of sin, and the amiable face of Holiness, which is the Image of God: There you may see both Heaven and Hell for all that they are invisible; and may know what *will* be, and that to all Eternity, as well as what is.

And will not such a sight in the glass of Gods Word, serve turn to move thee presently to give up the trade of sinning, and to Resolve before thou stir for God? I am now come to the end of this part of my work; if the reading of it have brought thee to the End of thy ungodly, careless life, it will be happy for thee, and I shall so far attain the End of my labour. I have purposely put this Direction of the Necessity of Resolution in the last place, that I might leave upon thy spirit the Reasons for Resolution, that here I have laid down. And now I beseech thee Reader whoever thou art; with all the earnestness that I am able to use with thee, as ever thou wouldest scape the fruits of all thy sin, as ever thou wouldest see the face of God with comfort, and have him thy reconciled Father in Christ; as ever thou wouldest have a saving part in Christ; and have him stand thy friend in thy extremities; as ever thou wouldest have hope in thy death, and stand on the right hand, and be justified at Judgement; as ever thou wouldest scape the day of Vengeance prepared for the unconverted, and the endless misery that will fall upon all unsanctified Souls, as sure as the Heaven is over thy Head: See that thou *Resolve* and *Turn to God*, and trifle with him no more. Away with thy old transgressions; away with thy careless, worldly life; away with thy ungodly company; and set thy self presently to seek after thy Salvation with all thy heart, and mind, and might. I tell thee once more, that Heaven and Hell are not matters to be jested with; nor to be carelessly thought of, or spoken of, or regarded. The God of Heaven stands over thee now while thou

thou art reading all these words, and he seeth thy heart, whether thou art Resolved to turn or not. Shall he see thee read such urgent Reason, and yet wilt not Resolve? Shall he see thee read these earnest requests, and yet not Resolve? What! not to come home to thy God, to thy Father, to thy Saviour, to thy self, after so long and wilful sinning? What! not to accept of Mercy, now it is even thrust into thy hands; when thou hast neglected and abused Mercy so long? O let not the Just and Jealous God stand over thee, and see thee guilty of such wickedness. If thou be a Christian, shew thy self a Christian, and use thy belief, and come to God. If thou be a man, shew thy self a man, and use thy Reason, and come away to God. I beseech thee read over and over again the Reasons that I have here offered thee, and judge whether a reasonable man should resist them, and delay an hour to come in to God. I that am now writing these lines of Exhortation to thee, must shortly meet thee at the bar of Christ. I do now adjure thee, and charge thee in the Name of the living God, that thou do not thy self and me that wrong, as to make me lose this labour with thee, and that thou put me not to come in as a witness against thee, to thy confusion and condemnation. Resolve therefore presently in the strength of Christ, and strike an unchangeable Covenant with him; Get thee to thy knees, and bewail with tears thy former life, and deliver up thy self wholly now to Christ; and never break this Covenant more.

If thou lay by the Book, and go away the same, and no perswasion will do any good upon thee, but unholie thou wilt still be, and sensual, and worldly still thou wilt be; I call thy Conscience to witness, that thou wast warned of the evil that is near thee; and Conscience shall obey this call, and bear me witness whether thou wilt

wilt or not : And this Book which thou hast read, which I intended for thy Conversion and Salvation , shall be a witness against thee : Though age or fire consume the leaves and lines of it, yet God and Conscience shall bring it to thy memory , and thou shalt then be the more confounded to think what Reasons , and earnest persuasions thou didst reject in so plain , so great , and necessary a case.

But if the Holy Ghost will now become thy Tutor , and at once both put this Book into thy hand, and his Heavenly light into thy understanding , and his life into thy heart , and effectually perswade thee to *Resolve* and *Turn* , how happy wilt thou be to all Eternity ? Make no more words on it ; but answer my request , as thou wouldest do if thou wert in a burning fire , and I intreated thee to come out. Thou hast long enough grieved Christ and his Spirit , and long enough grieved thy friends and Teachers : Resolve this hour , and Rejoyce them that thou hast grieved ; and now grieve the Devil , that thou hast hitherto rejoiced ; and hereafter grieve the wicked , and thy own deceitful flesh , whose sinful desires thou hast hitherto followed : And if thou also grieve thy self a little while , by that moderate sorrow that thy sin hath made necessary for thee , it will be but a preparative to thy endless joys , and the day is promised , and coming apace , when Satan that thou turnest from , shall trouble thee no more , and God that thou turnest to , shall wipe away all tears from thy eyes. And if the reading of this Book , may be but a means of so blessed an End , as God shall have the Glory , so when *Christ cometh to be glorified in his Saints , and admired in all them that do believe* (2 Thes. 1. 10.)

both

both thou and I shall then partake of the Commu-
nication of his Glory; if so be that I be sincere in
writing, and thou and I sincere in obeying the
Doctrine of this Book. *Amen.*

July 5.
1657.



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